

The Vikings in Ireland and Beyond

BEFORE AND AFTER THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF

Howard B. Clarke & Ruth Johnson, *editors*



THE VIKINGS IN IRELAND AND BEYOND

PATHWAYS TO OUR PAST



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The Vikings in Ireland and beyond: before and after the Battle of Clontarf

Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson

EDITORS



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VIKING DUBLIN: TRIAL PIECES

I

It could be a jaw-bone
or a rib or a portion cut
from something sturdier:
anyhow, a small outline

was incised, a cage
or trellis to conjure in.
Like a child's tongue
following the toils

of his calligraphy,
like an eel swallowed
in a basket of eels,
the line amazes itself

eluding the hand
that fed it,
a bill in flight,
a swimming nostril.

V

Come fly with me,
come sniff the wind
with the expertise
of the Vikings –

neighbourly, scoretaking
killers, haggars
and hagglers, gombeen-men,
hoarders of grudges and gain.

With a butcher's aplomb
they spread out your lungs
and made you warm wings
for your shoulders.

Old fathers, be with us.
Old cunning assessors
of feuds and of sites
for ambush or town.

SEAMUS HEANEY

In memoriam Richard Hall (1949–2011)



Richard Hall at York, 2005 (photograph courtesy of Ailsa Mainman of York Archaeological Trust).

The ‘beyond’ of the title of this volume includes the neighbouring island of Britain and the editors have thought it appropriate to dedicate this work to the memory of a major scholar whose interests and vision spanned both islands, just as, in the Viking Age itself, Dublin and York were linked in intricate and somewhat mysterious ways.

Richard Hall, born in Ilford, Essex, in 1949, moved to Belfast where he became interested in the past. From the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, he progressed to Queen’s University Belfast, where his interests focused on Anglo-Saxon and Viking archaeology, leading to an undergraduate study of Viking finds in Ireland. Then his doctorate, from the University of Southampton, was awarded for a thesis on the Danelaw in England. Like so many Vikings long before, Richard moved easily and productively from one island to another.

Moving to York in 1974, Richard joined the York Archaeological Trust as an excavations supervisor, his first professional appointment, progressing rapidly to deputy director and ultimately director of archaeology (1974–2011). One of the notable highlights of Richard's career came in 1976 when he led the excavations at Coppergate, discovering the well-preserved remains of Viking-Age wooden houses and tenth-century artefacts from industrial and domestic life in the heart of York.

Richard was instrumental in providing the public with access to the site by innovative viewing points where the work could be seen, his philosophy being that York's Viking past was not exclusively the preserve of academics but belonged to the people of York. This gave the York Archaeological Trust a mission – that of recognizing the exceptional importance of York's historic environment, in order to provide and promote archaeology of the highest possible standards in the city, its region and beyond. From this came the birth of the Jorvik Viking Centre in 1984, which, over the years, has informed and entertained millions of visitors. Richard, along with his co-workers, published a series of reports on the Coppergate excavations and also went on to write numerous books about the Vikings and their world, such as *Exploring the world of the Vikings* (2007).

Richard Hall's expertise was drawn upon by many international excavations, especially of Viking sites in Scandinavia, among them a major dig in 2001 at Kaupang – the early Viking-Age port in Norway – where archaeological evidence revealed that the Vikings had abandoned the area in the mid-ninth century, raising the possibility that York had been settled by Vikings from the Kaupang area. Among many positions of distinction he was a British representative on the Viking Congress, was active in the Lübeck International Urban Archaeology Symposium and served as a consultant to archaeological research and heritage projects in Scotland, Ireland and Norway, and for UNESCO in Germany.

The world of Richard Hall was in numerous ways the world of the Vikings, at least in western Europe. His exemplary scholarship, personal dedication and willingness to reach out beyond will long be remembered with heart-felt appreciation. The editors would like to think that he might have come to appreciate in his turn the contents of this volume.

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Foreword

This collection of essays originated in a symposium held in Dublin in April 2011, the theme of which was ‘Viking-Age Ireland and its wider connections’. The Midlands Viking Symposium is an outreach initiative by the universities of Nottingham, Birmingham and Leicester, which collaborate annually to circulate the findings of recent research in Viking studies to a wide audience of professionals and members of the public. The seventh annual Midlands Viking Symposium was hosted by Dublin City Council at the Wood Quay Venue, the first time that the event had been held outside the UK. It was co-organized by Dr Ruth Johnson, City Archaeologist and Professor Christina Lee of Nottingham University, who had met one another when attending the Viking Congress in Reykjavík in 2009. The symposium was supported by the National Museum of Ireland, the Friends of Medieval Dublin and the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

It was initially intended that the essays presented at the symposium would be published as a volume of proceedings in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*. After a call was made for supplementary papers, however, it became apparent that there was a substantial amount of new research and archaeological discovery warranting a more extensive interdisciplinary volume. The book was thus reimagined as a peer-reviewed collection of essays to be co-edited by Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson, published by Four Courts Press and funded by Dublin City Council. This handsome volume contains twenty-eight essays by a mixture of leading scholars and early career researchers from Ireland, the UK and Scandinavia, and it reflects the dynamism of scholarship in Viking studies and Ireland’s contribution to the Viking achievement.

Dublin is rightly known nationally and internationally for the wealth of its Viking and later medieval heritage uncovered in the course of archaeological excavations over the past half-century. These discoveries, old and new, constitute an impressive array of structures, weapons, tools and personal ornaments that attest to the wealth, importance and far-flung contacts of the Viking settlers of Dublin and its hinterland. In recent years, these older antiquarian and archaeological discoveries have been augmented by the pre-development excavation of furnished Viking graves at sites such as South Great George’s Street, Golden Lane, Ship Street and Finglas. These were uncovered as the direct result of the role of Dublin City Council’s archaeology office through the Planning and Development Department. Historically, Dublin City Council’s city archaeologist has been a Viking scholar, namely Andy Halpin (weapons and warfare), Dáire O’Rourke (shoes and leather working), and Ruth Johnson (art

and motif-pieces). Thus, ongoing research into Viking studies has informed and will continue to inform decision-making in planning and development in Dublin.

The year 2014 marked the millennial celebration of the Battle of Clontarf and I am proud to say that Dublin City Council was at the forefront of the commemoration, working in partnership with national, regional and local institutions to raise awareness of Ireland's Viking heritage. By supporting academic endeavour and access to high-quality information, *The Vikings in Ireland and beyond* provides a context and a legacy for the millennial celebrations.



OWEN KEEGAN
Chief Executive, Dublin City Council

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- AFM* *Annála ríoghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616*, ed. and trans. J. O'Donovan, 7 vols (Dublin, 1851; repr. New York, 1966)
- AH* *Analecta Hibernica, including the report of the Irish Manuscripts Commission* (Dublin, 1930–)
- AI* *The Annals of Inisfallen (MS Rawlinson B503)*, ed. and trans. S. MacAirt (Dublin, 1951)
- ALC* *The Annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs from AD1014 to AD1590*, ed. and trans. W.M. Hennessy, 2 vols (London, 1871; repr. Dublin, 1939)
- AMisc.* *Miscellaneous Irish Annals, AD1114–1437*, ed. and trans. S. Ó hInnse (Dublin, 1947)
- ASC* *The Anglo-Saxon chronicles*, ed. and trans. M. Swanton (rev. ed. London, 2000)
- AT* ‘Annals of Tigernach’, ed. and trans. W. Stokes in *Revue Celtique*, 16 (1895), 374–419; 17 (1896), 6–33, 119–263, 337–420; 18 (1897), 9–59, 150–97, 267–303; repr. in 2 vols (Felinfach, 1993)
- AU* *Annála Uladh, Annals of Ulster, from the earliest times to the year 1541*, ed. and trans. W.M. Hennessy and B. MacCarthy, 4 vols (Dublin, 1887–1901; 2nd ed. with intro. by N. Ó Muraile 1998); *The Annals of Ulster (to AD1131)*, ed. and trans. S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983)
- BL** British Library, London
- BM** British Museum, London
- BNJ* *The British Numismatic Journal and Proceedings of the British Numismatic Society* (1903–)
- cal.** calibrated
- CGG* *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, ed. and trans. J.H. Todd (London, 1867)
- ch./chs** chapter/chapters
- CIH* *Corpus iuris hibernici*, ed. D.A. Binchy, 6 vols (Dublin, 1978)
- CMCS* *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* (1981–93), continued as *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* (1993–)
- CS* *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. and trans. W.M. Hennessy (London, 1866)
- DIB* *Dictionary of Irish biography*, ed. J. McGuire and J. Quinn, 9 vols (Cambridge, 2009)
- EHR* *The English Historical Review* (1886–)
- esp.** especially
- Excavations* *Excavations: summary accounts of archaeological excavations in Ireland* (Dublin and Bray, 1969–76, 1985–)
- FA* *The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*, ed. and trans. J.N. Radner (Dublin, 1978)
- fig./figs** figure/figures

<i>fl.</i>	<i>floruit</i> ; was active
intro.	introduced by/introduction
<i>JCHAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society</i> (1892–)
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Celtic Studies</i> , 3 vols (1949–82)
<i>JGAHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society</i> (1900–)
<i>JIA</i>	<i>Journal of Irish Archaeology</i> (1983–)
<i>JKAHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society</i> (1968–)
<i>JLAHS</i>	<i>Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society</i> (1904–)
<i>JRSAI</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i> (1849–)
<i>MGH SSRG</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptores rerum Germanicarum</i> (Hanover, 1871–)
<i>NHI</i> , i	<i>A new history of Ireland</i> , i: <i>Prehistoric and early Ireland</i> , ed. D. Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005)
<i>NMAJ</i>	<i>North Munster Antiquarian Journal</i> (1936–)
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
NMS	National Monuments Service
ns	new series
NUI	National University of Ireland
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i> (1903–)
pers. comm.	personal communication
pl./pls	plate/plates
<i>PRIA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</i> (1836–)
<i>PSAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland</i> (1851–)
pt	part
rev.	revised
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
RSAI	Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
<i>s.a.</i>	<i>sub anno, sub annis</i>
ser.	series
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TNA	The National Archives, London
trans.	translated by/translation
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i> (1872–)
<i>TRIA</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy</i> , 33 vols (1786–1907)
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin
<i>UJA</i>	<i>Ulster Journal of Archaeology</i> (1853–)
<i>ZCP</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie</i> (1896–)

Note that references to Irish annals are normally to the stated year(s), while corrected dates are given in the main text. Exceptionally, references to the Annals of Tigernach are to page numbers in the Llanerch reprint, and those to the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland to the page and entry numbers in Radner's edition.

Contributors

REBECCA BOYD is a Viking-Age archaeologist with research interests in urbanism, household archaeology and social identities. Her doctoral thesis explored how families and households in Ireland's Viking Age used their buildings to structure their lives. Rebecca's current research includes the Irish diaspora and presenting Viking heritages to non-academic audiences.

MARTIN BYRNE is a partner in Byrne, Mullins & Associates – Archaeological & Historical Heritage Consultants, established with Clare Mullins in 1994, and a former chairperson of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland. His MA thesis explored various methods of non-intrusive archaeological prospection techniques, with particular emphasis on electrical resistivity surveying. Martin has undertaken a number of archaeological investigations within the area of Viking-Age Dublin and is the author of a number of articles in books and journals.

HOWARD B. CLARKE is emeritus professor of medieval socio-economic history at UCD and a member of the RIA. His Viking-related work includes *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age*, edited jointly with Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnall Ó Floinn (1998), together with articles on Viking-Age Dublin, other towns, warfare and the question of christianization.

CHRISTIAAN CORLETT is an archaeologist in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. He has written, compiled and edited many books with subject matter ranging from archaeology, folklore and history to early photography. He is a frequent contributor to the quarterly magazine *Archaeology Ireland* and to various national and local journals.

CHARLES DOHERTY has recently retired from the School of History and Archives, UCD. He has been president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland (2009–13). In 2013–14 he was a Fellow in the Centre for Advanced Study in the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Oslo, where he collaborated on an international project researching the 'Representation of the warrior in relation to the king in early north-west Europe'. Together with Professor Jan Erik Rekdal he is editing the book born of that project.

CLARE DOWNHAM is a senior lecturer in Irish studies at the University of Liverpool. Her first book *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland* was published in 2007. She is currently writing textbooks on Viking history and Irish history for I.B. Tauris and Cambridge University Press.

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GILLIAN FELLOWS-JENSEN's interest in the Vikings was awoken when she studied Old Icelandic at University College London. Her PhD from 1962 was a critical edition of an Icelandic text concerning battles in England. Since then her academic career was spent at the University of Copenhagen, where she specialized in place-names and personal names of Scandinavian origin occurring in Britain, Ireland and Normandy. Gillian retired in 2003 but is still involved in several onomastic projects.

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DAVID GRIFFITHS is reader in archaeology and a fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford University. He is the author of *Vikings of the Irish Sea* (2010) and the co-author of *Meols: the archaeology of the north Wirral coast* (2007). A former visiting researcher in Tromsø, Norway, he also runs a major field project in Orkney.

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BRIAN HODKINSON graduated in archaeology from the Institute of Archaeology in London and then, for many years, worked on medieval sites in Norway before moving to Limerick in 1987. There he worked on many of the excavations before becoming part of the staff of Limerick City Museum, where he is now acting curator. He has published widely on Limerick's medieval history and archaeology – work brought together in *Aspects of medieval north Munster: collected essays* (2012).

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John Sheehan, he edited *The Viking Age in Ireland and the West* (2010), the biggest recent collection of Viking essays.

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O'Brien kings, but a unifying theme is the nature of cross-cultural contacts across diverse ethnic groups.

GARETH WILLIAMS is a curator at the British Museum and has published extensively on Viking coins, hoards and currency systems. Other interests include Viking warfare and he is currently completing the publication of a Viking camp in Yorkshire. He curated the international exhibition 'Vikings: life and legend' at the British Museum in 2014.

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Founded in 1849, the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland's aims are 'to preserve, examine and illustrate all ancient monuments and memorials of the arts, manners and customs of the past, as connected with the antiquities, language, literature and history of Ireland'. The affairs of the society are conducted by the president, officers and council, whose services are entirely voluntary. We are indebted to the presidents past and present Charles Doherty and Rachel Moss, and to the society's council for their endorsement.

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The Vikings in Ireland and beyond is dedicated to the memory of archaeologist Richard Hall and we are indebted to the York Archaeological Trust for permission and assistance to do so, and in particular to Ailsa Mainman and David Jennings.

A volume of themed essays is the sum of its parts and we are naturally greatly appreciative of the authors not only for participating but also for their forbearance with the process. It is fair to say that the scope of the essays intrigued, surprised and challenged us in our editing and we trust that we have done justice to their endeavours. Finally, the following scholars kindly gave of their valuable time to assist us with our editorial queries: Lesley Abrams, Steve Davis, Seán Duffy, David Dumville, Nancy Edwards, James Graham-Campbell, Stephen Harrison, Poul Holm, Maurice Hurley, Michael Kenny, Heather King, Betty O'Brien, Ed O'Donovan, Ragnall Ó Floinn, Aidan O'Sullivan, Michael Ryan, Maeve Sikora and Niamh Whitfield.



Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson at Dublinia,
2015 (photograph by Melanie van der Linde).

Preface

Moderately wise a man should be, not too crafty or clever. For a learned man's heart whose learning is deep seldom sings with joy.

Hávamál

When it was established in 1849, it is clear that the founders of the then Kilkenny Archaeological Society (now the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland) were either unfamiliar or simply disagreed with these lines from the Old Norse *Poetic Edda*. Since its inception, the society has, with a happy heart, promoted learning about the culture and past of Ireland, initially through field survey and the collection of artefacts and subsequently through excursions, lectures and publications. Although perhaps best known for its annual journal, the society has a distinguished record in the publication of books. In recent years, collections of essays have been published in honour of distinguished members, or to draw together and record for posterity the proceedings of particularly successful conferences. This latest book published under the auspices of the society is a collaboration with Dublin City Council and is, as the title suggests, intended instead to commemorate an anniversary – the one thousand years that have passed since the Battle of Clontarf.

While the anniversary of the battle may have provided the impetus for this book, its scope extends far beyond the events of the spring of 1014. Rather, the twenty-eight essays provide a broader view of Scandinavian interactions with these islands, based on the most recent archaeological, literary, documentary and art historical research.

The collection starts with an essay by Signe Horn Fuglesang, in which she provides a glimpse of pre-Christian north European society through the evidence for cult and sanctuary in Viking and Slav lands. The archaeology of cult is explored through ritual objects, buildings and places. Against this background, the activities of the first missionaries are examined, setting the scene for much of the discussion in the book.

The unprecedented increase in archaeological investigation that marked the so-called Celtic Tiger years has thrown a flood of light upon the Vikings, clearly demonstrated in a number of the essays in the book. For Emer Purcell it has stimulated a more detailed and critical questioning of the written sources, her essay demonstrating how a concentration on individual annalistic entries, together with a similar scrutiny of the excavated burials, allows for a more nuanced analysis of the earliest evidence for the presence of Vikings in Ireland. She suggests that, even in the earliest period, it was not simply a question of

hit-and-run raids, but rather that the Norse established temporary bases on islands and on the coast.

Evidence for the more established fortification, the *longphort*, is explored by Eamonn Kelly. Morphological and locational factors are considered together with excavated finds or associated stray finds and place-name evidence. In particular, D-shaped enclosures on the shores of rivers or lakes and fortified promontories seem to be diagnostic features. Various locations exhibiting such features are examined in detail, including those at which excavations have taken place, to provide a gazetteer of archaeologically explored *longphuirt* across the country. It is now suggested that the roots of urbanism in Ireland lay in the establishment of a *longphort* and that the distinction between *longphort* and town may be artificial.

Arising out of recent studies of the Viking *longphort*, Gareth Williams assesses the evidence for exchange in relation to these camps. He discusses the role of the camps, their location and their interaction with their surroundings. He provides a comprehensive survey of the finds from such camps in Ireland, Britain, Francia and Scandinavia. In particular he examines the role of silver in all the forms in which it is found and its use and reuse. The importance of weights and scales is considered and also non-silver coins. He raises a number of important questions about the nature of exchange and the extent of pre-urban or proto-urban trade in England and Ireland before the Viking settlements.

Colmán Etchingham looks at the evidence in the Irish annals relating to the recently discovered base at Annagassan and seeks to place it in an historical context. He extracts from forthcoming publications on the relationship between the Fair Foreigners (Norwegians) and Dark Foreigners (Danes) to contradict previous scholarship and compares the activities of the Vikings associated with Annagassan with those of the Vikings in Britain and the Continent. He reinforces the idea that Viking bases were not established at random, but were chosen to exploit local political divisions.

Four Viking graves were discovered in an excavation at South Great George's Street, Dublin, in 2003. In her essay, Linzi Simpson surveys burials on both sides of the River Liffey, before narrowing her focus to the four George's Street burials. Detailed scientific analysis distinguishes between an origin for these warriors in Scandinavia and in their colonies elsewhere. Finally, the analysis of one skeleton, which was more complete and whose accompanying goods were in a relatively good state of preservation, allowed an exceptionally important glimpse of a young warrior (aged between 17 and 25 years) in life. The location of the graves on the edge of the pool of Dubhlinn has implications for settlement in this area at a very early stage.

Brian Hodkinson's essay also deals with settlement. Despite many excavations, the exact site of the Viking town of Limerick has been elusive. This essay draws together the evidence, historical and archaeological, relating to Viking

activity at Limerick and the surrounding area. An explanation is given to suggest why such uncertainty surrounds the location of the town. The boundaries of the hinterland of Viking Limerick are explored using archaeological finds and place-names. Despite the lack of archaeological evidence, there is sufficient annalistic information to demonstrate that an important Viking town existed at Limerick.

It has often been claimed that Viking weapons were superior to those of the Irish. Andy Halpin examines the yew-wood bow from Ballinderry crannog (no. 1), Co. Westmeath. This is the first scientific examination of the bow, providing a detailed description of the object and placing it within the context of the tenth century. The author leads us into the world of the bow in general and the longbow in particular. He suggests a re-evaluation of the significance of the bow in military and other uses and challenges currently held theories about the origin of the famous English longbow.

Catherine Swift discusses the theme of weaponry on a wider basis. She produces a counter-argument to the conclusions of Gillian Fellows-Jensen's essay that there was not 'a great deal of linguistic contact between the Irish and the Vikings' through her study of Norse loanwords in medieval Irish texts, and their contexts. She quarries sagas, poetry, annals and translations or adaptations of classical literature to inform her discussion of words dealing with weapons, ships, warriors, cavalry and officials acting on behalf of major kings. The author's conclusion is that 'military equipment from the later tenth century [in Ireland] parallels that found elsewhere in northern Europe and dating from the same time'. She also suggests that the Middle Irish literature that she has examined is chivalric, exhibiting values that are very like those found in other parts of contemporary Europe.

Another essay that deals with literature is that by Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, examining the alleged 'traitorous' role of Máel Sechnaill at the Battle of Clontarf. Brian Bórama is one of the iconic figures of Irish history. The saga that ensured his enduring fame, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, is a wonderful piece of propaganda. Brian's great rival Máel Sechnaill has always stood in the shadow of Brian. This essay very sensitively explores the way in which Máel Sechnaill is presented in the annals, in poetry and possibly in saga. It teases out the areas of bias in the sources and indicates how and why the contemporary material was retrospectively enhanced or altered at later periods. In particular it highlights the way in which Máel Sechnaill was presented as a two-faced traitor at the time of the Battle of Clontarf.

Not all Scandinavians may have come directly from Scandinavia and typical Norse cultural features are often not immediately obvious. Rebecca Boyd provides an interesting discussion of why the typical Viking longhouse is absent in Ireland. Urban house types and their classification by various scholars are discussed. These are compared to native house types, together with an exploration of the evolution of Irish house forms from round to rectangular. Evidence for possible rural Viking houses is examined, as is the problem of

nomenclature in relation to the use of the terms 'Viking' and 'Hiberno-Scandinavian'. The conclusion is that 'If the architecture of a community reflects the cultural identity of that community, the architecture in Ireland reflects a hybrid cultural identity, characterized by variation and integration'.

Martin Byrne provides an account of the houses found during excavations that took place between June 1992 and April 1993 in a 30m-long strip between Castle Street and Lord Edward Street – a site that lay at the heart of Viking Dublin. Investigations showed that Castle Street dates from the Viking Age, with the earliest phase dating to the late tenth century. The habitation plots and houses were generally larger than those at Fishamble Street and this, together with hoards of silver coins, suggests that it was an area of some affluence. Evidence of pre-twelfth-century amber working was discovered, together with a great many artefacts and archaeobotanical materials that will greatly enhance understanding of the early medieval town once the post-excavation analysis has been completed.

Whereas Martin Byrne indicates that an area within Dublin had a specific character, Christiaan Corlett highlights one outside the town. He revisits the distinctive grave-slabs that Pádraig Ó hÉailidhe named 'Rathdown slabs'. To date, these have been found only in the barony of Rathdown, and Ó hÉailidhe placed them between the ninth and twelfth centuries, suggesting that they were of Viking origin. The main motifs on the crosses are cup-marks, concentric circles, linear bands, herringbone patterns, arcs and crosses. Corlett argues that, while these grave-slabs could mark the resting places of clergymen, it is possible too that they mark the graves of secular individuals – the abstract designs perhaps particular to families. He suggests that the cup-and-ring motifs are 'broadly reminiscent of the commonest form of early Viking shields', which, he posits, bore early heraldic signs, possibly reflected in the grave-slab designs. It is suggested that they occur in a discrete area containing Welsh settlement and that the slabs represent a reaction to what may have been an identity crisis among the Hiberno-Norse families of the area.

Two essays deal with the important role of silver in relation to the economy, as used not merely by the Norse, but also by the Irish. John Sheehan examines the finds of silver from the Viking-Age settlement at Woodstown, Co. Waterford. Silver, in varying forms, was discovered right across the explored part of the site. These finds are analysed in the light of the various ways in which silver is found – in 'assemblages', hoards, hacksilver, coins, ornaments, ingots and in offcuts or as a by-product of smelting. The essay highlights the delicate way in which this material must be approached and shows clearly the rewards that accrue from such a careful examination. The various roles of the silver as social ornament, coin and currency are discussed. Related objects, such as weights and scales, are important in any consideration of the use of silver. The role of Kaupang and southern Scandinavia is highlighted in relation to this material.

Shortly before Sitriuc Silkenbeard introduced the first native coinage (closely modelled on Anglo-Saxon prototypes), just before 1000, three hoards were deposited in houses at Castle Street and Werburgh Street. These consisted of a variety of Anglo-Saxon silver coins from various mints. The first of the Castle Street hoards consisted of seventy-nine coins while the second contained 242. A hacksilver hoard was also recovered, suggesting that a dual economy continued to exist during this period in Dublin. The Werburgh Street hoard contained 125 coins. These finds have allowed Andrew Woods to reassess the extent to which coinage circulated in Dublin and more widely in Ireland. The discovery of hoards within specific areas of the town may indicate the localization of particular activities and that coinage was not just the preserve of international merchants but was also used by resident craftspeople. Examination of the areas in England from which the coins came suggests a booming economy and contacts within Ireland with Anglo-Saxon England and beyond.

Howard Clarke examines the long reign of Sitriuc Silkenbeard in a broader context. Like Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, he has arguably been underestimated, both tending to be overshadowed in historical memory by Brian Bórama. Sitriuc, as the ruler of Ireland's most important craftworking and trading centre, had wider physical contacts and mental horizons than any of his peers. Half-Norse by birth, he spoke the language of Scandinavian Europe as well as that of the native Irish, yet was clearly aware of opportunities and possibilities in every part of the island of Britain and eventually made his famous journey to Rome and back. He survived most of the vicissitudes of turbulent times as a king who was different and who made a difference.

Art, craft, ornament and dress can be important indicators of ethnic origin, interaction between peoples or rejection of the culture of others. A number of essays deal with these problems. Uaininn O'Meadhra in her essay surveys the surviving motif-pieces from Viking-Age Ireland. 'These scraps of bone, stone or wood, displaying discrete panels of ornamental motifs – mainly geometric, foliate and animal interlace – are best understood as apprentices' learning attempts and artisans' trials, worksheets and samplers.' They are 'an Insular, mainly Irish, phenomenon' and may be used to assess the transmission of artistic borrowings and techniques in different directions. The author's subtle study of these gives us an insight into whether originals were copied slavishly or creatively – or indeed whether they formed the basis of completely new creations. Links are established with the Scandinavian world in general and interestingly with Gotland and the eastern Baltic in particular.

Jessica McGraw examines motif-pieces in the context of artistic training. The relationship between master and apprentice is considered. Some objects show an increasing degree of competence across a range of repeated designs. How far were designs attempted simply to create a good copy? How far is there evidence of manipulation of an original design subtly to alter it for a new taste? Were

foreign motifs adjusted for a native taste? Some ideas tried out on motif-pieces would seem not to have made it into the accepted repertoire. It is suggested that comparison of the Dublin motif-pieces with other sites in the country that have produced such pieces would be very instructive. It would seem that artists and artisans were a lively group in Viking-Age Dublin sharing and shaping ideas. Much of this discussion takes place within a theoretical framework.

Joanne O'Sullivan focuses on a small artefact and demonstrates just how much can be learnt from what to many would be an insignificant object. A series of excavations in Dunmore Cave in Co. Kilkenny have yielded important finds, among which is 'the second largest composite glass bead necklace of Scandinavian import found in Ireland outside Viking Dublin'. This essay places the beads in an international context and provides much information about Scandinavian ornament in Ireland.

Christina Lee pinpoints the position of women in Norse studies through an examination of surviving fabrics and the imprint of lost fabrics preserved in metalwork. From the outset, the question of who the women were is considered. Did many Scandinavian women travel with their menfolk? The position of women in the slave trade is considered, together with the exchange of women through marriage. All of this allowed for the borrowing of skills and techniques. How far was dress an indicator of identity and status? Were textiles traded? What was the role of women in the economy? These and many other interesting questions are raised in this essay.

Griffin Murray reviews the evolution of scholarly opinion concerning the influence of the Urnes style on Irish art. A detailed analysis of the zoomorphic art style of the Cross of Cong establishes the blending of Urnes and Insular features that can best be termed 'Hiberno-Urnes' or 'Irish-Urnes'. Dublin is suggested as the most obvious source for this hybrid style, also found on St Manchán's shrine, the Holycross plaque, the Aghadoe crozier and other products of Máel Ísu and his workshop. Its use is attributed to the Cross of Cong's patron, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair who, with Muiredach Ua Dubthaig, was striving for an archdiocesan capital for Connacht. Ua Conchobair was particularly concerned with the international town of Dublin and its ecclesiastical contacts, leading Murray to suggest that the new Hiberno-Urnes style emerged as a result of contemporary secular and ecclesiastical politics.

In order to understand the Vikings in Ireland it is necessary to place their activity in the context of not merely the Scandinavian homelands, but also those territories in which they settled or with which they had contact. A number of essays examine these wider perspectives. David Griffiths has set out 'to highlight and discuss a number of uncertainties about cultural and ethnic definitions, which are raised by archaeological, historical and toponymic evidence, and to emphasize that a nuanced picture, taking account of regional and historical diversity is essential to understanding this period'. Consideration is given to the

extent and intensity of Norse settlement in the British Isles and Ireland and emphasis is placed upon the hybridization of cultures in these areas. Problems concerning the interpretation of place-names in relation to Norse settlement are discussed, together with the hybridization seen in the names of moneyers on coins. The impact of the Vikings on the various Irish Sea societies is examined. The question of why Scandinavian traits continued so long, even outlasting conversion to Christianity, is considered. Given the current scientific research, the author anticipates a change in our perceptions of the Vikings in the near future.

Early medieval settlement produced many by-products. In recent decades, specialist scientific examination of the remains of animals, insects and cesspits has begun to take us closer to the lives of the medieval inhabitants than was ever possible in the past. The essay by Eileen Reilly covers settlements in Ireland, England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Russia to throw new light on Viking-Age living conditions. This is a vast area and it is surprising, allowing for local variations, that there are so many shared features. It is clear from this discussion that these methodologies have tremendous potential to enhance our current, more traditionally based, historical and archaeological knowledge.

The Irish Sea and western Scotland have long been seen as an area that allowed for much interaction among the peoples living along its shores. The historical evidence for western Scotland in the early Middle Ages is scarce and difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, a number of recent studies and theories have appeared. By drawing upon these hypotheses, Clare Downham has provided a thought-provoking review of the role of Vikings in this area. She examines the evidence from Islay, suggesting that it lay on a cultural and political frontier and provided a significant power-base for Scandinavian settlers in the Hebrides. She then examines the group referred to in the sources as the *Gallgoídir*, particularly in the Hebrides, against the various other group identities in the area. This in turn throws light upon the impact of Vikings on the cultural histories of Britain and Ireland.

Gillian Fellows-Jensen has studied Scandinavian place-names in England (particularly in the Danelaw), in the Irish Sea area and in Scotland. She brings this background to bear on her study of place- and personal names of Norse origin in Ireland. This is a most useful survey of the evidence, comparing 'the wealth of annalistic material surviving in Ireland with contemporary English and Norman annals and chronicles'. The occurrence of gaelicized Norse names in England emphasizes the interaction of peoples within the Irish Sea area. She examines the names of urban settlements and also those in the hinterlands of the towns.

Finally, two essays deal with the impact that an embedded idea can have upon scholarship – that is that Vikings were responsible for disruption in various aspects of Irish life during what has been called the 'Viking Age'. Ruth Johnson

highlights the accepted scholarly wisdom that there is a gap in the artistic record during the tenth century (with the exception of high crosses). She provides a comprehensive survey of the art historical literature since the nineteenth century to expose the bias that scholars seem to have in relation to this phenomenon. Despite a great deal of revision about the role of the Norse and their impact upon Irish society in recent decades, the author notes that scholarly contributions since *c.*2000 continue to shy away from dating objects to the late ninth and tenth centuries.

In the final essay of this book, Donnchadh Ó Corráin revisits the problem of historiography in relation to the study of the Vikings in Ireland. He points out that the message of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, the well-known propaganda saga dating to *c.*1100, still influences the subject. He demonstrates this by pointing not only to the work of several scholars of the first half of the twentieth century, but also to that of more recent commentators in the field. Despite studies on trade dating back to 1909, much contemporary writing (there are notable exceptions) still assumes that trade began with the appearance of Vikings in Ireland. The continuing idea that Irish scholars fled to the Continent to avoid the Vikings is challenged, as is the assumption that scholarship in Ireland collapsed during the ninth and tenth centuries. Most importantly, the question is asked: why were the Irish so successful against any attempt on the part of the Vikings to conquer large parts of Ireland when they were capable of destroying almost all the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England? And even more importantly: why did the Irish fail to withstand the English in the twelfth century if they were so successful against the Vikings?

The essays in this book are thought-provoking. Many problems in one area of research are echoed in others. New archaeological finds have helped to answer some questions, but more often they have thrown up new problems. The contributors to this volume have shown just how challenging those questions can be.

The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland is grateful to all of the authors for sharing their scholarship and to its honorary editor, Howard Clarke, and the Dublin City Archaeologist, Ruth Johnson, for the challenging task of organizing and editing such a substantial volume of essays by many of the leading experts in the field. For bringing the volume to fruition, we are especially grateful for the financial support of Dublin City Council and to Four Courts Press, who continue to play a crucial role in the dissemination of knowledge about our medieval past.

RACHEL MOSS and CHARLES DOHERTY
Present and former RSAI presidents

Ireland and the Viking Age

HOWARD B. CLARKE AND RUTH JOHNSON

Loscadh Rechrainne o geinntib, ‘the burning of Rechru by the heathens’: thus wrote the anonymous scribe of the Annals of Ulster for the year 795.¹ Coincidentally, the islands of Inishmurray and Inishbofin are reported to have been plundered, possibly by the same crew or crews.² Irish consciousness of Scandinavia in the Viking Age goes back a long way. The initial outlook of the Christian Irish was undoubtedly conditioned by the fact that their Scandinavian visitors were non-Christians who were prone to violence. The Viking Age in Ireland would evolve in complex ways over a period of approximately three centuries, yet that first impression would prove again and again to be strong and virtually ineradicable. A powerful preservative of this viewpoint was a text that has only slowly come to be seen by modern scholars as a work of high medieval propaganda with powerful literary overtones, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, written in the late eleventh or early twelfth century.³ This text has cast its shadow over the entire subject since it was published in 1867, with the result that an all-pervasive antiquarianism has endured and has even been revived.⁴ The historiography of the Vikings in Ireland is a story of periodic progress countered by resolute recidivism. In an enlightened and enlightening survey of this story emanating from a Danish scholar,⁵ it can be seen that progress there has been, as the contents of this book will also demonstrate. In order to measure it, we offer a summary account of past scholarly achievements and developments.

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF VIKING-AGE IRELAND

The patterning of the medieval past involves disciplinary, generational and national perspectives. An archaeologist’s perspective is different from an

¹ *AFM*, s.a. 790 refer to the destruction of shrines at Rechru, which on topographical grounds is more likely to have been Rathlin Island, off the coast of Co. Antrim, than Lambay, off the coast of Co. Dublin. The Isle of Skye in the Inner Hebrides was likewise devastated (*AU*, s.a. 794). ² *AI*, s.a. 795. ³ *CGG*. On the date, see M. Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib: some dating considerations’, *Peritia*, 9 (1995), 354–77; D. Ó Corráin, ‘Viking Ireland: afterthoughts’ in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 449–50; D. Casey, ‘A reconsideration of the authorship and transmission of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*’, *PRIA*, 113C (2013), 1–23. ⁴ For example, in S. Duffy, ‘What happened at the Battle of Clontarf?’, *History Ireland*, 22:2 (2014), 30–3. This special issue of the journal is devoted entirely to Brian Bórama. ⁵ P. Holm, ‘Between apathy and

historian's or a philologist's; an early twenty-first-century standpoint is peculiar to itself; a Danish outlook is unlikely to be the same as a Norwegian one. Among the academic disciplines, the subject owes most to the efforts of archaeologists, historians, numismatists and philologists. Progress in each of these has been intermittent and generally uncoordinated. Sometimes a single individual working principally in one of the major disciplines has made a significant step forward, yet that work has as often as not been ignored or misunderstood by experts in other fields. Only recently has a more consciously interdisciplinary approach been attempted by a small number of scholars, in the face of scepticism on the part of others.

From the 1830s to 1921

The story opens in the 1830s with the first overviews and some significant finds of coins.⁶ Around the time of the Great Famine, in November and December 1845, Viking-Age finds from the Dublin area were presented to the Royal Irish Academy.⁷ Shortly afterwards and quite fortuitously the Danish archaeologist, Jens Worsaae, visited Ireland as part of his investigation of Scandinavian antiquities preserved in these islands.⁸ An enduring image from that period is James Plunket's watercolour drawing of finds from the western part of the city, inscribed 'Swords found near Kilmainham of the times of the Danes – in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy'.⁹ The results of Worsaae's studies were published in English in 1852.¹⁰ One of his avowed aims was to convey 'a juster and less prejudiced notion than prevails at present respecting the Danish and Norwegian conquests; which ... have hitherto been constantly viewed in an utterly false and partial light'.¹¹ This is an early example of the natural inclination of Scandinavian authors to counter the stock western European portrayal of Vikings as terrorists. In the same spirit, Worsaae could write that 'the north sent out the flower of its youth and strength, not merely to destroy and plunder, but rather to lay the foundations of a fresher life in the western lands, and thus to impart a new and powerful impulse to human civilization'.¹² The battle lines of a debate that continues to this day had already been drawn.

More Scandinavian artefacts of the Viking Age were recovered from the same general area west of Dublin in 1866 and an account of these was given to the Royal Irish Academy in December of that year by Sir William Wilde.¹³ Despite

antipathy: the Vikings in Irish and Scandinavian history', *Peritia*, 8 (1994), 151–69. 6 *Ibid.*, 152–3. 7 P.F. Wallace and R. Ó Floinn, *Dublin 1000: discovery and excavation in Dublin, 1842–1981* (Dublin, 1988), p. 2. 8 D. Henry (ed.), *Viking Ireland: Jens Worsaae's accounts of his visit to Ireland, 1846–47* (Balgavies, 1995). This useful compilation includes an afterword by R. Ó Floinn entitled 'Worsaae and Irish antiquarianism' (*ibid.*, pp 82–5). 9 *Ibid.*, p. iv. 10 J.J.A. Worsaae, *An account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1852). The Irish section is reprinted in Henry, *Viking Ireland*, pp 33–81. 11 Worsaae, *Account of the Danes and Norwegians*, p. viii and cf. p. 35. 12 *Ibid.*, p. 79. 13 W.R. Wilde, 'On the Scandinavian antiquities lately discovered at Island-bridge, near

the fact that Worsaae had identified the Kilmainham site as a Scandinavian cemetery, Wilde believed that the Islandbridge finds represented the outcome of a battle with the native Irish.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Wilde recognized Norwegian parallels among the artefacts that had been obtained by such tragically haphazard means.¹⁵ Nearly half a century was to elapse before a more complete, though scarcely adequate, catalogue was published.¹⁶ The objects were now correctly understood to be grave-goods, yet somewhat bizarrely they were described without qualification as Danish.¹⁷ Thereby a longstanding misimpression about the country of origin of most Viking-Age Scandinavians in Ireland was carried forward well into the twentieth century, notwithstanding the important advances made by a small group of Norwegian scholars towards the end of the previous century.

The same is true of a remarkable book first published in 1881 – Charles Haliday's *Scandinavian kingdom of Dublin*.¹⁸ Haliday had died in 1866, the year of Wilde's original essay, and his work was made available posthumously by his barrister friend, J.P. Prendergast. In his lengthy and fascinating introduction, Prendergast adverts to Haliday's peculiar division of personal labour, which at one point involved working in the daytime as a trader, retiring to bed at 8pm, studying from 11.30pm to 5am, and sleeping again until 8.30am. Not surprisingly the merchant-scholar began to suffer from hallucinations and eventually lost the sight of one eye through excessive study.¹⁹

Haliday's book arose out of an attempt to write a history of the port and harbour of Dublin, which in turn led to the question of the bridge.²⁰ Building on a medieval tradition that the bridge was associated with the Danes of Dublin,²¹ Haliday extended his researches into Scandinavian records, sending to London, Paris and Copenhagen for any likely books that could be bought. As Prendergast commented, 'no one almost had thought of having recourse to Scandinavian sources'.²² In the event, Haliday succeeded in tracing a creditable number of editions of Norse texts, even if he was not able to treat them critically. On the other hand, when he was conducting his research in the 1850s, the principal Irish source accessible in print was the *Annals of the Four Masters*. O'Donovan's edition of 1848–51 – an astonishing achievement in itself – included in its footnotes extracts from other sets of annals, thus enabling Haliday and his editor

Dublin', *PRIA*, 10 (1866–9), 13–22. 14 Ibid., 14; Worsaae, *Account of the Danes and Norwegians*, p. 60. 15 Wilde, 'Scandinavian antiquities', 13. The article consists essentially of a catalogue of the principal finds, together with engravings of some of them. 16 G. Coffey and E.C.R. Armstrong, 'Scandinavian objects found at Island-bridge and Kilmainham', *PRIA*, 28C (1910), 107–22. By this time the artefacts had been transferred to the NMI. 17 Ibid., 121. 18 C. Haliday, *The Scandinavian kingdom of Dublin* (2nd ed. Dublin, 1884; repr. Shannon, 1969). 19 Ibid., pp viii, xvi. 20 Ibid., pp xlv–xlvii, cv. Well over a century would elapse before such a work was published as H.A. Gilligan, *A history of the port of Dublin* (Dublin, 1988). 21 Haliday, *Scandinavian kingdom of Dublin*, pp xlvii–xlviii. 22 Ibid., p. lii.

to compile a fairly full, pioneering account of Viking Dublin.²³ The chief settlement of Scandinavian Ireland had received due recognition by the 1880s.

The year of Wilde's report to the Royal Irish Academy and of Haliday's death also witnessed a landmark publication, that of *Chronicum Scotorum*.²⁴ During the remainder of the nineteenth century the other major annalistic texts became available in print: the Annals of Ulster, the Annals of Tigernach in a highly unsatisfactory arrangement extended through three volumes of a French periodical, and finally the seventeenth-century English language version of the Annals of Clonmacnoise.²⁵ Coincidentally, and so fatefully for Irish Viking-Age studies, J.H. Todd's long-awaited edition of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* appeared in 1867.²⁶ For its time this was a work of immense learning, not to mention the heroic labour of translating into modern English the grossly hyperbolic and rarefied language of the original. The flavour of the text is well conveyed in the panegyric of Brian Bórama:²⁷

Dóigh isé ro fuaslaic fir Erenn, ocus a mná ó daeire, ocus ó dochar Gall ocus allmharach. Is é ro bris cuicc catha ficet for gallaibh, ocus ros marbh, ocus ros indharb amail ro raidsemar romhainn.

For it was he that released the men of Erin, and its women, from the bondage and iniquity of the foreigners, and the pirates. It was he that gained five and twenty battles over the foreigners, and who killed and banished them as we have already said.

Since 1867, the image of King Brian, of the Battle of Clontarf, and of the Vikings in Ireland portrayed so sensationally and indeed so successfully in *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* has seized the imagination not only of Irish people in general but also of scholars at home and abroad. The mind-set of a medieval propagandist and his audience was transmitted across the generations with astonishing ease, as if all were hearing what they wanted to hear.

Such is the background to a notable efflorescence of interest in the Vikings in Ireland created by a small number of scholars in Norway. The accessibility of the great bulk of the Irish annalistic corpus in printed editions, along with the

²³ An edition of the Fragmentary Annals was also published before Haliday's death as J. O'Donovan (ed. and trans.), *Annals of Ireland: three fragments copied from ancient sources by Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh* (Dublin, 1860). Its modern replacement is *FA*. ²⁴ *CS*, also known as *Chronicum Scotorum*, the form used, for example, in G. Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals* (Dublin, 1975). The hiatus for the years 723–803 inclusive means that this set of annals has no information about the advent of the Vikings to Ireland (*CS*, pp 124–5). ²⁵ W.M. Hennessy and B. MacCarthy (ed. and trans.), *AU*. For other details, see above, list of abbreviations, under *AT*, *AU*. ²⁶ Prendergast added a few footnotes to this edition, but Haliday's book remained refreshingly uncontaminated by the distortions that all but overcame Irish perceptions of the Viking phenomenon after 1867. ²⁷ *CGG*, pp 202–5.

central importance of Dublin manifested by the grave-fields at Kilmainham and Islandbridge, and by Haliday's posthumous monograph, are clearly reflected in a book written by L.J. Vogt and published in 1896.²⁸ It is difficult to decide which is the more extraordinary: the admirable thoroughness with which the author approached his task, or the abject neglect suffered by his work in Ireland during the past century and more.²⁹ Vogt's book embraces not only the classic Viking Age but also its Hiberno-Norse continuation down to the seizure of Dublin by the Anglo-French allies of Diarmait Mac Murchada in 1170. It is largely independent of Haliday, being based on the much more extensive amount of annalistic material that was then in print. There soon followed a whole series of publications by Alexander Bugge, some of them in English.³⁰ An interesting point of comparison between Ireland and Norway in these years revolved around the related questions of cultural identity and political independence, the latter being achieved by the Norwegians in 1905. By a strange irony, a shared Viking-Age experience could be used to boost national aspirations in both countries. Bugge's work was complemented by the philological study of C.J.S. Marstrander published during the First World War; this appears to have enjoyed a wider circulation, at least among philologists.³¹

At the end of this historiographical period, coinciding with the achievement of independence for most of Ireland, the existing body of knowledge and ideas current in that country was summarized in a short book by Annie Walsh.³² The postgraduate thesis on which it was based was written during her tenure of a travelling studentship from the National University of Ireland and had been accepted for a research degree certificate of the University of Cambridge in March 1920.³³ The research had been directed by Henry Chadwick, whose thinking is presumably also represented in the general interpretation. Archaeology receives little attention, apart from a brief reference to Hiberno-Norse coins, scales and weights as 'certain archaeological discoveries'.³⁴ Walsh relied essentially on what she termed annals, chronicles and sagas.³⁵ She accepted *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaihbh* as a source whose credibility equalled that of the annals, including the material about Tuirgéis as some kind of super-Viking.³⁶

28 L.J. Vogt, *Dublin som norsk by. Fra vort ældste kjøbstadsliv* (Kristiania, 1896). 29 A copy has been available in the National Library of Ireland since 1918. 30 A. Bugge, *Contributions to the history of the Norsemen in Ireland*, 3 pts (Kristiania, 1900); A. Bugge, 'Nordisk sprog og nordisk nationalitet i Irland', *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 15 (1900), 279–332; A. Bugge, 'Bidrag til det sidste afsnit af Nordboernes historie i Irland', *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 19 (1904), 288–315; A. Bugge, *Vesterlandenes indflydelse paa Nordboernes ... i vikingetiden* (Kristiania, 1905); A. Bugge (ed.), *On the Fomorians and the Norsemen* (Kristiania, 1905). In Holm's judgment, Alexander Bugge 'wrote the best part of what has ever been written in any Scandinavian language about the Vikings in Ireland' ('Between apathy and antipathy', 158). 31 C.J.S. Marstrander, *Bidrag til det norske sprogs historie i Irland* (Kristiania, 1915). 32 A. Walsh, *Scandinavian relations with Ireland during the Viking period* (Dublin and London, 1922). 33 Ibid., preface. 34 Ibid., p. 34. 35 Ibid., preface. 36 Ibid., pp 1–2 and passim.

Like many other scholars before and since, she conceived of Dublin as a town as early as the ninth century.³⁷ More than anything else, Walsh's book demonstrates how poorly the subject of the Vikings in Ireland was understood in that country at the end of the *ancien régime* there.

From 1922 to 1972

Independent Ireland was to establish nationalist credentials in a predominantly Celtic milieu. Broadly speaking, much of the work of cataloguing archaeological artefacts, textual analysis and historical reinterpretation was done by outsiders; only in the last few years of this period can one detect the stirrings of a new approach. The initial stimulus came, appropriately enough, from Scandinavia in the form of Jan Petersen's classification of Viking swords published in 1920.³⁸ Most of the sample came from Scandinavia itself; thus, when Haakon Shetelig undertook his ambitious scheme to catalogue Viking artefacts and sites in these islands, there was a suitable opportunity to classify the swords recovered in Ireland in accordance with Petersen's system. The survey was made in 1926 but not published until many years later.³⁹ The predominance of the Dublin material is made clear by the arrangement of the contents, reflecting a distribution of pagan grave-goods in Ireland that persists to this day. It remains to be demonstrated that there were in fact any durable and sizeable Scandinavian settlements in Ireland, apart from Dublin, before the tenth century. This was the context for a remarkably prescient comparative study of northern European trading settlements, in which plans of Dublin, Limerick and Waterford were reproduced on a small scale along with nine other examples.⁴⁰ This is equally true of a major literary analysis published in the same year, perhaps because 'no real addition to history can be expected' from such material.⁴¹

In this long saga of the historiography of Viking-Age Ireland, a place of honour must be found for a Dutchman, A.J. Goedheer, whose thesis was published on the eve of the Second World War.⁴² Goedheer's intentions were to examine the Irish and Norse traditions together, to distinguish the romantic from the historical elements, and to explain the growth of legendary motifs around the hero-figure of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*.⁴³ He went on to demonstrate that most of the tradition about the Battle of Clontarf, both Irish

37 Ibid., p. 3. 38 J. Petersen, *De norske vikingesverd. En typologisk-kronologisk studie over vikingetidens vaaben*, 2 vols (Kristiania, 1919–20). 39 J. Bøe, *Norse antiquities in Ireland* (Oslo, 1940). This volume incorporates a small number of Scandinavian graves investigated in the 1930s. 40 W. Vogel, 'Handelsverkehr, Städtewesen und Staatenbildung in Nordeuropa im früheren Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaften für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 66 (1931), reproduced more accessibly in H. Jankuhn, *Typen und Funktionen vor- und frühwiking-erzeitlicher Handelsplätze im Ostseegebiet* (Vienna, 1971), fig. 1. 41 R.T. Christiansen, *The Vikings and the Viking wars in Irish and Gaelic tradition* (Oslo, 1931), p. 2. 42 A.J. Goedheer, *Irish and Norse traditions about the Battle of Clontarf* (Haarlem, 1938). 43 Ibid., p. x.

and Norse, is 'for a great part legendary rather than historical'.⁴⁴ Yet, despite this vital insight, Goedheer allowed himself to be seduced by two early twelfth-century Munster products, the Book of Rights and *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, praising the former as the most satisfactory source of information about the reign of Brian Bórama and apparently accepting the Tuirgeís story more or less at face value.⁴⁵ The power of the Norsemen vis-à-vis the Irish was exaggerated, for the author envisaged the possibility of a Scandinavian conquest of Ireland down to the time of the Norwegian king, Magnus Barelegs.⁴⁶ In effect, Goedheer was inconsistent; in the words of one recent commentator, 'it seems as if [he] held back from his own results'.⁴⁷ The outcome was a lost opportunity and the by now firmly established modern traditions about the Vikings in Ireland in general and about the Battle of Clontarf in particular continued to hold sway.⁴⁸ They met the requirements of a Catholic and nationalist agenda only too well.

The years between the publication of Goedheer's thesis and Bøe's catalogue (1938–40), on the one hand, and the first international conference with a Viking theme to be held in Ireland (1959), on the other hand, were rather lean. A single article with a very modest title and written by an English scholar stands out.⁴⁹ Despite its many factual errors and reliance on late texts, the main ideas are worth re-evaluation. They concern Scandinavian rural settlement in Ireland, intermarriage and trade between the two peoples, and the significance of the second expedition of Magnus Barelegs in 1102–3. The 1959 conference was a meeting of the International Congress of Celtic Studies, but had as its subject the impact of the Vikings on the Celtic lands. Scholars then based in Aberystwyth, Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Oslo and Reykjavík took part and the proceedings were published in 1962.⁵⁰ The contents are mainly linguistic and onomastic, although archaeology was meant to be represented.⁵¹ The most influential of the contributions was probably D.A. Binchy's cataclysmic interpretation entitled 'The passing of the old order', which attributed to the Viking invasions the demise of the island of saints and scholars.⁵² Herein the nationalist agenda attained one of its sharpest academic expressions in a Viking-Age context.⁵³

The author whose work best represents this wind of change was A.J. Lucas, the director of the National Museum of Ireland from 1954 to 1977. In 1966 he asked the pertinent question whether the time had come for a reappraisal of

44 Ibid., p. 103. 45 Ibid., pp 104–5. 46 Ibid., p. 108. 47 Holm, 'Between apathy and antipathy', 163. 48 Ibid., 163–5. 49 J.I. Young, 'A note on the Norse occupation of Ireland', *History*, ns, 35 (1950), 11–33. 50 B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples, c.800–1100AD: introductory papers read at plenary sessions of the International Congress of Celtic Studies held in Dublin, 6–10 July, 1959* (Dublin, 1962). 51 Ibid., p. v. 52 Ibid., pp 119–32. 53 Another example, cited by Holm, is J. Ryan, 'Brian Bórama, king of Ireland' in E. Rynne (ed.), *North Munster studies: essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick, 1967), pp 355–74.

Irish–Norse relations.⁵⁴ The initial stimulus behind his thinking was a related question, the plundering and burning of churches in early medieval Ireland, on which he published an influential essay in the following year.⁵⁵ Lucas made a conscious, though preliminary, attempt ‘to view the evidence anew in the absence of the perspective which this emotional religious element has inevitably lent to previous evaluations of the data’.⁵⁶ A statement in his discussion of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* is worth quoting in full:

The effect of the premature and persuasive nationalism of the *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* has ... been to create the impression of a continual and ferocious assault on the country by the Vikings, broken only by a forty year pause, and of a permanent hostility on the part of the Irish towards them as aliens, as invaders, as enemies of Christianity, as plunderers of churches and as, at all times, cruel and relentless foes.⁵⁷

By 1966, Lucas, an Irishman, had reached the point where Worsaae, a Dane, had stood over a century earlier.⁵⁸ He proceeded to discuss Norse–Irish alliances, and Norse influence on Irish boats and navigation, and on weapons. At the very end of the article he referred briefly to another harbinger of change that had been brought to his attention by a colleague – Peter Sawyer’s *Age of the Vikings*.⁵⁹

Two landmark monographs in specialized fields were also published in the same decade. One was the late Michael Dolley’s sylloge volume on Hiberno–Norse coins, which deals with what he termed ‘the earliest major coinage in these islands to have been struck outside the limits of what is now England’.⁶⁰ This work contains a valuable bibliographical note and drew a distinction between Norwegian and Danish ‘spheres of influence’, placing Ireland firmly in the former.⁶¹ The second monograph was part of Françoise Henry’s great trilogy on Irish art.⁶² Her depiction of the Viking Age in Ireland is a traditional one and this in turn pervades the interpretation of artistic developments. In a word, ‘the impact of the Vikings was catastrophic’.⁶³ A corollary of this view was to exaggerate the town-building capacity of the Scandinavian settlers. Even in a ninth-century context, Dublin was thought of as a ‘city’,⁶⁴ while the attempt to describe it in the Viking Age is uncomfortably close to that of George Little.⁶⁵

⁵⁴ A.J. Lucas, ‘Irish–Norse relations: time for a reappraisal?’, *JCHAS*, 71 (1966), 62–75.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 62–3; A.J. Lucas, ‘The plundering and burning of churches in Ireland, 7th to 16th century’ in Rynne, *North Munster studies*, pp 172–229. ⁵⁶ Lucas, ‘Irish–Norse relations’, 63.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 64. ⁵⁸ See Henry, *Viking Ireland*, p. 66. ⁵⁹ Lucas, ‘Irish–Norse relations’, 75, n. 27; P.H. Sawyer, *The age of the Vikings* (London, 1962). It is clear that Lucas had formulated his ideas quite independently of Sawyer’s work. ⁶⁰ R.H.M. Dolley, *The Hiberno–Norse coins in the British Museum* (London, 1966), p. vi. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp 3–7, 15–18 and map 1. ⁶² F. Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions (800–1020AD)* (London, 1967). A French edition had been published three years earlier by Éditions Zodiaque as the second of three volumes called simply *L’art irlandais* (Paris, 1963–4). ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 17. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 8, 11, 13. ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 34–8;

The accompanying map is crudely drawn and completely misleading in a Viking-Age context.⁶⁶ Although the commencement of the great programme of archaeological excavation is acknowledged, it was still too early for a definite picture to emerge.

Thus it was without the aid of scientific archaeology that Donnchadh Ó Corráin wrote his survey of Viking-Age Ireland, in a chapter of a text-book published at the very end of this second historiographical period.⁶⁷ Its insights are textually based and in tune with Sawyer's questioning approach to hitherto orthodox interpretations. First, it was pointed out that the early raids, down to and including the year 836, average out at about one recorded instance a year and that they are not likely to have had a serious effect except on the places, mainly coastal, that were attacked.⁶⁸ Second, following Kathleen Hughes and Lucas, the secular aspect of the greater monasteries, both before and during the early Viking Age, was emphasized.⁶⁹ Third, the 'legend' of Tuirgéis (Latin Turgesius), was demolished 'once and for all', or at least so it was hoped, for it still surfaces with monotonous regularity in undergraduate essays.⁷⁰ Fourth, the political acceptance of the Vikings by Irish leaders can be demonstrated as early as the mid-ninth century: 'from this point Norse-Irish alliances, especially in the incessant dynastic squabbles and in the struggle for paramountcy amongst the Irish kings, became commonplace'.⁷¹ Fifth, rivalry and warfare between the major Scandinavian settlements in the second quarter of the tenth century, though mentioned only briefly, directed attention away from the view that 'the Vikings' in Ireland constituted some kind of homogeneous force.⁷² Finally, the effects of the Vikings on trade, on the growth of towns, and on the arts and literature were considered in a more compressed and less satisfactory manner.⁷³ But whatever criticisms may be made of this chapter, there can be no doubt that the subject of the Vikings in Ireland had been established, in a broad context, on a platform of critical scholarship.

From 1973 to the present

A more international intellectual environment is apparent from the early 1970s. In the summer of 1973 the Seventh Viking Congress was held in and around Dublin and its proceedings were published in due course.⁷⁴ An archaeological

G.A. Little, *Dublin before the Vikings: an adventure in discovery* (Dublin, 1957). ⁶⁶ Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions*, facing p. 41. For the cartographical background, see H.B. Clarke, 'The mapping of medieval Dublin: a case-study in thematic cartography' in H.B. Clarke and A. Simms (eds), *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the ninth to the thirteenth century*, 2 pts (Oxford, 1985), ii, p. 633 and fig. 23.7. ⁶⁷ D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin and London, 1972), pp 80–110. ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 80–3. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 83–9. ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 91–2. ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp 92–3 and cf. p. 94: 'Indeed, the most important role they [the Vikings] played in the second half of the ninth century was as allies of the greater Irish kings'. ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 103. ⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp 105–10. ⁷⁴ B. Almqvist and D. Greene (eds), *Proceedings of*

exhibition was opened in the National Museum of Ireland in the presence of congress members and a special catalogue was produced to mark the event.⁷⁵ Here the material was arranged thematically, without any attempt at chronological separation; most of the Viking artefacts are late in date, that is, Hiberno-Norse. In the conference proceedings archaeology is represented by papers by Charlotte Blindheim on Kaupang and by Breandán Ó Riordáin on Dublin.⁷⁶ The volume contains much that is of enduring value, especially the contribution by James Graham-Campbell.⁷⁷ The Dublin congress was held part way through the great series of National Museum excavations directed by Ó Riordáin and P.F. Wallace, which began in 1962 and was completed in 1981.⁷⁸ The first major publication to deal with a number of these sites (those of Ó Riordáin) appeared in 1983.⁷⁹ It contains a meticulous examination of eighty-three buildings, which are interpreted as belonging to a tradition common to southern Scandinavia and northern Germany.⁸⁰ Two years later, the first summary of Viking-Age Dublin as a whole in terms of its archaeology was published in an important paper by Wallace, whose system of classification of buildings differed from Murray's and has since been widely accepted.⁸¹

By the 1980s, even excluding the excavations conducted by the Office of Public Works and, in a brief phase, the Dublin Archaeological Research Team, an enormous amount of archaeological material had been generated. For those conducted by the National Museum, a special, tripartite series of reports, produced under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy, began to appear in print in 1987. Most of the reports that have been published so far are Viking-related. The A-series is concerned with buildings and topography, and at present the sole representative is the description and discussion by Wallace.⁸² The B-series, dealing with artefacts, now covers a wide range of topics: ship graffiti, decorated wood, boat and ship timbers, ringed pins, runic inscriptions, headcoverings, scabbards and sheaths, weapons, and coopering.⁸³ Environmental

the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15–21 August 1973 (Dublin, 1976). ⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 8; National Museum of Ireland, *Viking and medieval Dublin, National Museum excavations, 1962–1973: catalogue of exhibition* (Dublin, 1973). ⁷⁶ C. Blindheim, 'A collection of Celtic (?) bronze objects found at Kaupang (Skiringssal), Vestfold, Norway' in Almqvist and Greene, *Seventh Viking Congress*, pp 9–27; B. Ó Riordáin, 'The High Street excavations', ibid., pp 135–40; repr. in H.B. Clarke (ed.), *Medieval Dublin: the making of a metropolis* (Dublin, 1990), pp 165–72. ⁷⁷ J.A. Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-Age silver hoards of Ireland' in Almqvist and Greene, *Seventh Viking Congress*, pp 39–74. ⁷⁸ For the chronology and site locations, see P.[F.] Wallace, 'The archaeology of Viking Dublin' in Clarke and Simms (eds), *Comparative history of urban origins*, i, p. 104, fig. 5.1. ⁷⁹ H. Murray, *Viking and early medieval buildings in Dublin ...* (Oxford, 1983). This book is based on material from Ó Riordáin's excavations of 1962–3 and 1967–76, and on a doctoral thesis on early Irish houses. ⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 86. ⁸¹ Wallace, 'Archaeology of Viking Dublin'. ⁸² P.F. Wallace, *The Viking-Age buildings of Dublin*, 2 pts (Dublin, 1992). ⁸³ J.T. Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood: a study of its ornament and style* (Dublin, 1988); A.-E. Christensen, 'Ship graffiti and models' in

evidence is the subject of the C-series, in which one of the Fishamble Street plots features in minute and painstaking detail.⁸⁴

The results of the large-scale excavations in Waterford in recent years have now been published in an equally large-scale volume, which relates mainly to the eleventh century and later.⁸⁵ All of this analysis and publication is at last making available to scholars and the wider public the dramatic increase in new material for investigation and understanding Viking-Age Ireland. New knowledge is being accompanied by new thinking, one particularly fine example of which is an essay on coins and coin-usage in this period.⁸⁶ Here the fundamental point is derived from the fact that most Viking-Age coin hoards were deposited in areas that were then under Gaelic control, suggesting that contact with Scandinavians heightened Irish awareness of coins and their uses, especially in Brega, Meath and northern Leinster.

There can be little doubt that the prime stimulus behind this more energetic and positive approach to Viking-Age studies in Ireland was the opportunity to excavate scientifically parts – and in the case of Dublin and Waterford quite considerable parts – of all five of the places that are usually regarded as towns of Scandinavian origin. Historians and others writing from an historical perspective, however, have not been idle. Towards the beginning of this historiographical period two major works were produced by A.P. Smyth.⁸⁷ Both have been roundly and soundly criticized, mainly for methodological failings,⁸⁸ but at least the basic intention behind Smyth's books – to make use of the widest possible range of sources with an international and a transnational dimension – is laudable enough. In the same spirit, Sawyer explored similarities between the Irish and the Scandinavians using Icelandic material.⁸⁹ One of his concluding

P.F. Wallace (ed.), *Miscellanea 1* (Dublin, 1988), pp 13–26; S. McGrail, *Medieval boat and ship timbers from Dublin* (Dublin, 1993); T. Fanning, *Viking-Age ringed pins from Dublin* (Dublin, 1994); M.P. Barnes et al., *The runic inscriptions of Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 1997); E. Wincott Heckett, *Viking-Age headcoverings from Dublin* (Dublin, 2003); E. Cameron, *Scabbards and sheaths from Viking and medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2007); A. Halpin, *Weapons and warfare in Viking and medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2008); M.G. Comey, *Coopers and coopering in Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 2010). 84 S. Geraghty, *Viking Dublin: botanical evidence from Fishamble Street* (Dublin, 1996). 85 M.F. Hurley et al., *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford excavations, 1986–1992* (Waterford, 1997). 86 M. Kenny, 'The geographical distribution of Irish Viking-Age coin hoards', *PRLA*, 87C (1987), 507–25, where the maps update and modify those in Graham-Campbell, 'Viking-Age silver hoards of Ireland'. See also J. Sheehan, 'Early Viking-Age silver hoards from Ireland and their Scandinavian elements' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, p. 174, fig. 6.4. 87 A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: the history and archaeology of two related Viking kingdoms*, 2 vols (Dublin and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1975–9; repr. as 2 vols in 1, Dublin, 1987); A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian kings in the British Isles, 850–880* (Oxford, 1977). 88 See, for example, D. Ó Corráin, 'High-kings, Vikings and other kings', *IHS*, 21 (1978–9), 283–323; R.I. Page, 'A tale of two cities', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 335–51. 89 P. Sawyer, 'The Vikings and Ireland' in D. Whitelock et al. (eds), *Ireland in early mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, 1982), pp 345–61.

observations was that 'if we recognize that the Vikings were in some, perhaps many, respects much like the Irish, it may be easier to understand their relations with, and influence on, each other, an influence that has apparently left its mark on the themes and even on the form of some Icelandic literature'.⁹⁰

A valuable counterpoint to the dominance of urban archaeology in a Viking-Age context was provided by John Bradley in 1988.⁹¹ The emphasis was shifted towards the rural hinterlands of Hiberno-Scandinavian towns of the tenth century and later, control over which was essential to sustain town life. In Viking studies a genuinely interdisciplinary approach is essential, despite the real difficulties that confront practitioners of this art. Viking Dublin was examined archaeologically, historically and topographically in an essay published in 1991.⁹² Yet another desideratum is to cease to cull material from the Irish annals without taking sufficient account of their changing nature through time. A systematic treatment of Viking raids on churches in the ninth century makes an important advance in this direction.⁹³

The year before the third Dublin conference to feature Ireland and Scandinavia, an historiographical essay from a Danish perspective was published.⁹⁴ Poul Holm's interpretation ranged 'between apathy and antipathy'. Antipathy on the part of the Irish towards the Vikings was established first, on the basis of longstanding folk traditions, the annals, and above all *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*. Antipathy was, after all, a natural currency among a people that had been oppressed for so many centuries by a more powerful neighbour. Myth-makers, whether ancient or modern, seize on stereotypes. Tuirgéis served perfectly as an anti-hero, a super-Viking of awesome reputation whose military exploits were matched only by the outlandish and uncouth behaviour of his pagan wife.⁹⁵ His opposite number (though not contemporary) was Brian Bórama, the all-Irish hero who allegedly forestalled a Viking conquest of Ireland and who came near to unifying a country that was acutely conscious from 1922 onwards of its enforced partition. As Holm recognized,⁹⁶ and as we ourselves have stressed, change came in the 1970s in a more internationalized and multicultural milieu in which pluralism was a moderately respectable concept.

Much of that sense of change is encapsulated in an essay written by the same scholar who played a significant part in launching the process back in 1972.⁹⁷ It is a complex story of raiding, settlement, political interaction and cultural

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 361. ⁹¹ J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland' in J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin OSA* (Kilkenny, 1988), pp 49–78. ⁹² H.B. Clarke, 'The bloodied eagle: the Vikings and the development of Dublin, 841–1014', *Irish Sword*, 18 (1990–2), 91–119. ⁹³ C. Etchingam, *Viking raids on Irish church settlements in the ninth century: a reconsideration of the annals* (Maynooth, 1996). ⁹⁴ Holm, 'Between apathy and antipathy'. ⁹⁵ CGG, pp 12–13, 226. ⁹⁶ Holm, 'Between apathy and antipathy', 151. ⁹⁷ D. Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, Wales, Man, and the Hebrides' in P. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of the Vikings* (Oxford and New

assimilation. Some corrections were made to the earlier version: for example, the small but important point that the 'Ross Com' attacked in 807 was Roscam near the head of Galway Bay, not inland Roscommon as used to be thought.⁹⁸ An idea put forward by Dolley is revived, to the effect that the mysterious *Laithlind* of the ninth century was not part of Norway but part of Scotland.⁹⁹ Thus the two fleets (or single divided fleet) that arrived on the Boyne and the Liffey in 837 'must have come from bases nearer than Norway', according to this view.¹⁰⁰ This argument has implications for the date of importation and deposition of the Viking loot of Irish origin that has been found extensively in western Norway.

The 1200th anniversary of the first recorded raids on Ireland by Vikings was the occasion of a major international conference held in Dublin Castle. The resulting volume of published essays focused on the ninth and tenth centuries, defined then as the early Viking Age, and contained important papers devoted to archaeology, history and literature.¹⁰¹ The scholars in question came from Ireland, Britain and all parts of Scandinavia, expressing both Insular and Nordic perspectives. It remains a landmark statement of enduring value. If this volume had strong Norwegian associations, a successor three years later drew attention to Ireland's links with Viking-Age Denmark.¹⁰² The chief inspiration of this work was the impressive longship known as *Skuldelev 2* housed in the ship museum at Roskilde. This vessel's estimated date of construction, 1042, coincided with the death in exile (probably in north Wales) of the last member of the traditional ruling dynasty at Dublin, Sitriuc Silkenbeard (Norse Sigtryggr *silkiskegg*). Many of the contributors to the volume were the same, but their essays cover a longer chronological framework. By the turn of the millennium, the archaeological record of Dublin itself was comprehensive and widely recognized, but in need of synthesis. A younger generation of scholars began to make their mark, including one whose title reflected the fact that scientific excavations had by then been conducted over four decades.¹⁰³ In a similar spirit, one of us offered an overview in monographic form dealing with a wide range of topics against a coordinated historical background.¹⁰⁴

York, 1997), pp 83–109. ⁹⁸ *AU*, s.a. 806; Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides', p. 85. This correction maintains the consistency of the pattern of essentially coastal raiding in the period 795–836 (Ó Corráin, 'Viking Ireland', p. 437, fig. 16.1). ⁹⁹ Dolley, *Hiberno-Norse coins*, pp 18–19; Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides', p. 87. ¹⁰⁰ Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides', p. 88. ¹⁰¹ Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*. ¹⁰² A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001). ¹⁰³ L. Simpson, 'Forty years a-digging: a preliminary synthesis of archaeological investigations in medieval Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin I: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 1999* (Dublin, 2000), pp 11–68. This has recently been complemented by the same author's 'Fifty years a-digging: a synthesis of medieval archaeological investigations in Dublin city and suburbs' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2009* (Dublin, 2011), pp 9–112. The Medieval Dublin series contains much new and invaluable material on Viking and Hiberno-Norse Dublin. ¹⁰⁴ R. Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 2004).

A different type of overview, published in 2007, represented a major advance in the internationalization of understanding Viking-Age Ireland and Britain.¹⁰⁵ Its central focus is Ímar the Boneless (Norse Ívarr *inn beinlausí*) and his dynasty, ending in 1014. English, Scottish and Welsh written sources are exploited to the full, making sense of so many hitherto disparate events. The work ends with a prosopography of Viking leaders named in Irish chronicles – another welcome breakthrough as a basis for further historical analysis. The same year witnessed the publication of the most professional account yet produced on the subject of Brian Bórama, the traditional hero of the bloodbath at Clontarf.¹⁰⁶ Again the annalistic and literary sources are exploited with calm assurance and to great effect. A complementary approach was developed by an American scholar, who consolidated archaeological and historical data into a number of GIS databases in order to generate a series of maps with an economic emphasis.¹⁰⁷ These maps relate to the extended Viking Age (795–1170) and the whole story of early urbanization in Ireland is examined in monographic form for the first time. The opening decade of the new century ended with a fourth Ireland-based collection of essays with a Viking theme, the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, held in Cork in the summer of 2005.¹⁰⁸ As in 1995 delegates came from many parts of the Viking world and the number of contributors to the resulting volume is far greater at fifty-eight. Both in terms of quantity and quality, this impressive volume is testimony to the health and wealth of Viking-Age studies in Ireland.

There are matters for further debate and research, but we can at least be satisfied that relations between Ireland and Scandinavia in the Viking Age have at long last been placed on a sound academic footing. Progress has been demonstrably fitful and intermittent. Nevertheless there has been a greater level of communication between scholars working in different disciplines and in different countries, for ‘the Vikings were enablers of communication, ultimately the most effective agent of change in all societies’.¹⁰⁹ In much the same spirit, this present collection of essays looks at Ireland and beyond.

IRELAND AND SCANDINAVIA

If the world of scholarship has been so replete with misconceptions about the Vikings in Ireland, it is hardly surprising that popular misconceptions have been even more deeply entrenched and widespread. As Worsaae observed in the

¹⁰⁵ C. Downham, *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland: the dynasty of Ívarr to AD 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007). ¹⁰⁶ M. Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru: Ireland's greatest king?* (Stroud, 2007). For photographs of the reconstruction of Skuldelev 2, known, somewhat incongruously, as *The Sea Stallion of Glendalough* under sail, see pls 16a and b. ¹⁰⁷ M. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), pp 12–13, 167–77, 179–82. ¹⁰⁸ J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010). ¹⁰⁹ Ó Corráin, ‘Ireland, Wales, Man

middle of the nineteenth century, all manner of features and objects in the Irish countryside were ascribed to 'the Danes'. These included raths, linear earth-works, cooking-places, copper mines, burial mounds, and even round towers.¹¹⁰ In those days such 'Danish' survivals even had a contemporary political resonance, as no less a figure than Daniel O'Connell urged his countrymen to imitate their ancestors who had crushed and expelled their Scandinavian oppressors.¹¹¹

The association of the Vikings in Ireland with Danes can be traced back a long way. To take a single example, Michael Richards' map of Mullingar, drawn in 1691, labels the adjoining circular and rectangular castles on the south side of the town as 'Danish forts'.¹¹² The frequency of this designation across Ireland is remarkable and must have had an effect on popular perceptions of the Vikings.¹¹³ Any explanation of this phenomenon is necessarily speculative, but one distinct possibility is that English settlers naturally assumed that the Vikings in Ireland, as in England for the most part, came from Denmark. English interest in the early Viking Age can be traced back to the sixteenth century, when King Alfred of Wessex acquired his distinctive appellation 'the Great' and Asser's life was first printed.¹¹⁴ Alexander Bugge commented that writers in English usually mixed up Danes and Norwegians in an Irish context, whereas Scandinavian authors always emphasized the Norwegian element.¹¹⁵ According to him, the majority of the settlers and members of the Dublin dynasty were Norwegian by origin.¹¹⁶

There can be no doubt that both Danes and Norwegians had a part to play in Irish affairs in the early Viking Age. Contemporary Irish people drew a well-known, if not so easily explained, distinction between 'Dark' and 'Fair' Foreigners. Bugge himself attributed this distinction to the fairer complexion of the more northerly peoples.¹¹⁷ Other explanations have been offered from time to time. Goedheer, for example, suggested that the differentiation was based on the colour of the sails of Danish and Norwegian ships – black and white respectively – while the focus of another suggestion was on red and white shields.¹¹⁸ Another theory has been built around the order of arrival in Ireland:

and the Hebrides', p. 109. 110 Henry, *Viking Ireland*, pp 44–6. 111 Ibid., pp 46–7. In the summer of 1843 one of O'Connell's monster meetings was held on the Hill of Tara, the site of Mael Sechnaill's decisive victory in 980, whereas that proposed for Clontarf in the following October was proscribed by the British government. For context, see J. Hutchinson, *The dynamics of cultural nationalism: the Gaelic revival and the creation of the Irish nation state* (London, 1987), p. 107 and passim. 112 J.H. Andrews with K.M. Davies, *Mullingar* (Dublin, 1992), pp 2, 10 and fig. 3. 113 R.A.S. Macalister, *The archaeology of Ireland* (London, 1928), p. 331. This section was omitted from the second edition published in 1949. 114 S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (trans.), *Alfred the Great: Asser's 'Life of King Alfred' and other contemporary sources* (London, 1983), pp 47–8; A.P. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1995), pp 166–8, 328–30. 115 Bugge, *Contributions to the history of the Norsemen*, no. I, p. 3. 116 Ibid., p. 11. 117 Ibid., p. 4, n. 2. 118 Goedheer, *Irish and Norse traditions*, p. 109, n. 2; J. Steffensen, 'A fragment of Viking history', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 18 (1970–3), 59–78.

the Norwegians were the 'old' Foreigners and the Danes the 'new' ones.¹¹⁹ The distinction is first recorded in 851, when Danes who had probably overwintered in England moved in a northerly direction to attack Norwegians already settled at Dublin and Annagassan.¹²⁰ The usage continues down to the year 927, when Sitriuc Cáech, who ruled successively at Dublin and York, died having been 'king of the Dark Foreigners and the Fair Foreigners'.¹²¹ Most recent of all is the suggestion that the original *Dubgaill* were the associates and descendants of Ímar, as opposed to the dominant *Finnngaill* in Ireland before their arrival.¹²²

The precise meaning of 'dark' and 'fair' in this context may be less important than the essential point that Danes as well as Norwegians were active as Vikings in Ireland in the period 851–927. To begin with, their relations were violently antagonistic and at least some of the factionalism evident in Dublin after Ímar's death in 873 could have been caused by that initial mutual hostility. After 927, when Danish York was absorbed into the West Saxon polity for the first time, outright rivalry may have ceased and the annalists' distinction was no longer made because it was no longer needed. Indeed the last instances of this usage, relating to the death of Ímar's grandsons Ragnall (921) and Sitriuc Cáech (927),¹²³ are essentially political by nature, for the two kinsmen had ruled over (Norwegian) Waterford and Dublin respectively and subsequently over (Danish) York.¹²⁴

On balance, however, the majority of the Scandinavian raiders, traders and settlers in Ireland are likely to have been of Norwegian stock, as Dolley's map implies. Consistent with this is the fact that very little loot of Insular origin has been found in Denmark.¹²⁵ From 864 onwards Danish energies were absorbed largely by England and from 879 by northern Francia and the Low Countries.¹²⁶ King Alfred's 'third war', which started in 892, ended with the final disbandment of the Great Army in 896.¹²⁷ Despite intermarriage, conversion to Christianity

119 A.P. Smyth, 'The "Black" Foreigners of York and the "White" Foreigners of Dublin', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 19 (1974–7), 101–17; D.N. Dumville, 'Old Dubliners and new Dubliners in Ireland and Britain: a Viking-Age story' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 78–93; C. Etchingham, 'Laithlinn, "Fair Foreigners" and "Dark Foreigners": the identity and provenance of Vikings in ninth-century Ireland' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 80–8. 120 *AU*, s.a. 850; *ASC*, pp 64–5. Section IV of the Fragmentary Annals, § 233, begins with a Danish assault on the Norwegian inhabitants of an unnamed place. 121 *AU*, s.a. 926. The 'possible reference' to Blacair (Norse Blakkr) as king of the Dark Foreigners in 943 is not supported by the new edition of the Annals of Ulster, where in a marginal interpolation Blacair is simply *rí Gall*, 'king of the Foreigners' (*AU*, s.a. 942; Smyth, 'Foreigners of York and Dublin', p. 116 and n. 52). 122 C. Downham, 'Viking identities in Ireland: it's not all black and white' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI*, pp 185–201. 123 *AU*, s.a. 920, 926. 124 The fleet that landed at Waterford in 914 had originated in Brittany and its ethnic composition could have been mixed. 125 E. Wamers, 'Insular finds in Viking-Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 47–59 and fig. 2.3. 126 *ASC*, pp 68–9, 76–7. 127 *Ibid.*, pp 84–9.

and other forms of acculturation, the Scandinavians who had settled in Ireland retained a significant degree of cultural cohesion. In later times they thought of themselves as *austmenn*, 'easterners', the term used in Icelandic sagas for Norwegians.¹²⁸ Latinized as *Ostmanni*, the Ostmen of Ireland would enjoy a moderately respectable history long after the advent of the Anglo-French. The Danish dimension to the Vikings as raiders in Ireland seems to have been confined mainly to the second half of the ninth century, prior to a much later antiquarian revival. In Denmark itself Saxo Grammaticus made Ímar a son of Ragnar *loðbrók* and thereby partly of Danish origin.¹²⁹ There may be some truth behind this tradition, but no support for it can be found in the Irish annals.¹³⁰ In the early Viking Age, Ireland and Scandinavia implies essentially Ireland and Norway.

THE EARLY AND LATE VIKING AGE

Many scholars in the past have expressed a view about when the Viking Age as a whole may be said to have occurred. First it has to be established, in the words of Jacqueline Simpson, that this cultural label and its analogues 'would have seemed meaningless to people living at the time'.¹³¹ Such labels are academic constructs, which by their nature tend to vary with the disciplinary and national perspectives of the scholars involved in the process of definition. In terms of round numbers a commonly held opinion is that the Viking Age extended over the period from *c.* 800 to *c.* 1100, limits which, somewhat optimistically perhaps, have been declared to be 'generally accepted'.¹³² A similar approach can be found in a number of wide-ranging works.¹³³ Some scholars who have used the traditional starting date, or something near to it, have tended to foreshorten at the end. For 'the greater part of western Europe' a termination at 1070 was proposed by Sawyer in 1962.¹³⁴ Scholars from Denmark, mindful of the collapse of Danish power in England in the middle of the eleventh century, appear to favour *c.* 1050.¹³⁵ One has

128 Young, 'Note on the Norse occupation of Ireland', p. 15, n. 25. 129 Smyth, *Scandinavian kings in the British Isles*, pp 17–35. 130 R.W. McTurk, 'Ragnar loðbrók in the Irish annals' in Almqvist and Greene (eds), *Seventh Viking Congress*, pp 93–123; Ó Corráin, 'High-kings, Vikings and other kings', pp 284–96. 131 J. Simpson, *Everyday life in the Viking Age* (New York, 1967); republished as *The Viking world* (London, 1980), p. 9. 132 R.I. Page, *Chronicles of the Vikings: records, memorials and myths* (London, 1995), p. 6. 133 M. Magnusson, *Hammer of the north* (London, 1976), p. 21; J. Graham-Campbell, *The Viking world* (rev. ed. London, 1989), p. 10; J. Haywood, *The Penguin historical atlas of the Vikings* (London, 1995), p. 8. The chronological list in a prestigious publication starts with the foundation of Ribe *c.* 705 and ends with the elevation of Lund as an archbishopric in 1104 (Sawyer (ed.), *Oxford illustrated history*, pp 273–81). 134 Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, p. 4; cf. G. Jones, *A history of the Vikings* (2nd ed. Oxford and New York, 1984), p. 1. 135 For example, K. Randsborg, *The Viking Age in Denmark: the formation of a state* (London, 1980), p. 2; E. Roesdahl, *Viking-Age Denmark*, trans. S. Margeson and K. Williams (London, 1982), p. 10. See F.D. Logan, *The*

a sense already that ‘the perception of the Viking Age’s chronological boundaries has become more complex’.¹³⁶

In terms of event-based history, Ireland witnessed a series of occurrences that strengthens the case for adopting *c.* 1100 as the end of the Viking Age. These were the two expeditions by Magnus Barelegs, king of Norway (1093–1103). In the course of the first of these, in 1098, the king’s overlordship of the Scottish Isles was recognized; in the course of the second, in 1102–3, Magnus campaigned jointly with the high-king of Ireland in Ulster, where this latterday Viking leader was killed in an ambush.¹³⁷ In effect Muirchertach Ua Briain was using Magnus much as ninth-century Irish rulers had used earlier generations of Vikings – as an ally with a fleet and skilled warriors at his command. Magnus met his death near the coast of Co. Down and there are at least two local traditions about his place of burial.¹³⁸ Furthermore, as Alexander Bugge pointed out long ago, this Norwegian royal expedition ‘assumed gigantic proportions in the imagination of the Irish, and grew to be an event that overshadowed all other contests between the Norsemen and the Irish’.¹³⁹ Verses were composed and a fictitious and romantic historical tradition was generated and absorbed into the Ossianic cycle.¹⁴⁰ As reproduced by Bugge,

Manos, leader of the host, has fallen,
Like a fiery meteor is the firth of currents.
Except a man who sought his peace
Or who took protection under our shield,
None of the followers of Lochlin’s king
Returned to his own land.¹⁴¹

Magnus’ erstwhile ally, Muirchertach Ua Briain, was the king who may have received and heard the text of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaihbh*. Irish relations with the Scandinavians were ambiguous right to the end of the Viking Age!

The event-based approach to the question of the beginning of the Viking Age is more clear-cut. The devastating and ostensibly shocking attack on Lindisfarne in 793, raids on ‘all the islands of Britain’ in 794, and specified destruction and

Vikings in history (2nd ed. London and New York, 1991), p. 11. One case of extreme foreshortening, to *c.* 1000, turns out to be inconsistent and to belong to this group (H. Clarke and B. Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester and London, 1991), pp 1, 3). ¹³⁶ E. Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, trans. S.M. Margeson and K. Williams (London, 1991), p. 10. ¹³⁷ *AU*, s.a. 1103; A.O. Anderson (trans.), *Early sources of Scottish history, AD500 to 1286*, 2 vols (Edinburgh and London, 1922), ii, pp 102–18, 126–35. The phrase *ri Lochlainni* is normally interpreted as ‘king of Norway’. ¹³⁸ Anon., ‘The Scandinavian invasions and County Down’, *Journal of the Down and Connor Historical Society*, 1 (1928), 61; A.W.K. Colmer, ‘Magnus Barfod – king of Norway’, *Lecale Miscellany*, 1 (1983), 11. ¹³⁹ Bugge, *Contributions to the history of the Norsemen in Ireland*, no. II, p. 4. ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8. For further material and discussion, see Christiansen, *Vikings and the Viking wars*, *passim*.

plundering of the Isle of Skye and Iona in the Inner Hebrides, and of Rathlin Island, Inishmurray and Inishbofin off the Irish coast in 795, together constitute a well-documented and widely dispersed start of a new age in north-western Europe.¹⁴² In the year before the sack of Lindisfarne, churches in Kent had been obliged to help with the defence of the sub-kingdom against pagan pirates,¹⁴³ while the incident that took place on the Dorset coast a few years earlier may have been, in the words of David Wilson, 'a trading venture which went wrong'.¹⁴⁴ For those who regard piratical attacks by Scandinavians on non-Scandinavian peoples as the essence of the Viking Age, the latter clearly began in the last years of the eighth century.¹⁴⁵ No new textual discovery is likely to change that position. In broad terms, therefore, an event-based definition of the Viking Age in western Europe works out at c.790 to c.1100. At the very least, the historical experiences of Ireland itself conform perfectly with this formulation.

Historically attested events have been used somewhat differently by Irish archaeologists working in this field. While 795 is commonly regarded as the beginning of the Viking Age in Ireland, the year 1170 has become its terminal counterpoint, based on the Anglo-French capture of Waterford and Dublin. In much of the secondary literature dealing with material culture, the standard periodization is 'early Christian', 'Viking Age', and 'medieval'. Accordingly the tautological construct 'Viking and medieval', and variants of it, occurs in the title of several works.¹⁴⁶ Even the prestigious *New history of Ireland*, a project of the Royal Irish Academy, has by implication fallen into line.¹⁴⁷ When compared with the German tradition of *Frühmittelalter*, *Hochmittelalter* and *Spätmittelalter*, and against a background of excellent periodicals entitled *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* (from 1967) and *Early medieval Europe* (from 1992), all of this makes little sense.

In effect a conceptual barrier has been erected between archaeologists and historians that continues to obfuscate any attempt to understand the past on mutually acceptable terms. What should be clear is that an event-based approach and a trend-based approach to the question of periodization are different from one another. They are not likely to lead to the same result. So much is evident from the current debate about the beginning of the Viking Age in general. It is only to be expected that changes in the material culture of Scandinavia in the eighth century will have anticipated by at least two or three generations the documented commencement of Viking attacks elsewhere.¹⁴⁸ Artistic motifs,

¹⁴² *ASC*, pp 56–7; *AU*, s.a. 793, 794; *AI*, s.a. 795. ¹⁴³ P. Sawyer, 'The age of the Vikings and before' in Sawyer (ed.), *Oxford illustrated history*, p. 3. ¹⁴⁴ *ASC*, pp 54–5; D.M. Wilson, *Economic aspects of the Vikings in the West: the archaeological basis* (Gothenburg, 1980), p. 19. ¹⁴⁵ For an up-to-date map of the early raids on north-western Europe, see Haywood, *Historical atlas of the Vikings*, p. 55. ¹⁴⁶ National Museum of Ireland, *Viking and medieval Dublin*; Murray, *Viking and early medieval buildings*; Curriculum Development Unit, *Viking and medieval Dublin* (rev. ed. Dublin, 1988). ¹⁴⁷ *NHI*, ii. The title of the first volume in this series is *Prehistoric and early Ireland*. ¹⁴⁸ See E. Roesdahl and D.M. Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader: the Scandinavians and Europe, 800–1200* (Uddevalla, 1992), p. 29. In an

proto-towns and ship design do not lend themselves to event-based history, yet they are the very stuff of trend-based archaeology.

An even bigger cloud hangs over the concepts 'early Viking Age' and 'late Viking Age'. These terms are often used but rarely defined. Here the firmest ground is English, for England had the misfortune to endure two distinct Viking Ages. The first extended from *c.*789 to *c.*954 and may be subdivided into six phases: first, occasional raids mainly by Norwegians (*c.*789–834); secondly, more frequent raids mainly by Danes (834–64); thirdly, the military crisis and political transformation associated with the Danish Great Army (865–80); fourthly, a period of political stalemate (881–909); fifthly, the West Saxon and Mercian conquest of eastern England as far north as the River Humber (910–20); and sixthly, the power struggle between the English and settled Danes who were reinforced from time to time by Dublin-based Vikings (921–*c.*954). After so many strife-torn generations, there was no end in sight from a contemporary perspective, witness the provision in King Eadred's will that money be set aside to buy peace from any Vikings who might launch further attacks.¹⁴⁹

During the reign of Edgar the Peaceable (959–75 as sole ruler), the English fleet patrolled coastal waters each summer, but Danish raids did not resume until 980.¹⁵⁰ The assassination of Edward the Martyr on 18 March 978 and the succession of his young and inexperienced half-brother Æthelred II created an aura of political uncertainty akin to that which had characterized fraternal rivalry in the Carolingian royal family following the death of Louis the Pious in 840. The outcome was a period of Danish rule (1016–42) and several direct challenges from Scandinavia, especially those of the Norwegian Harald the Hard Ruler (1066) and of the Dane Knut IV (1085–6).¹⁵¹ The greatest prize of the Viking Age in terms of accessible wealth – the kingdom of England – was of course won by frenchified descendants of earlier generations of Vikings who had settled in Normandy.

Accordingly, any satisfactory scheme for subdividing the Viking Age has to take account of the basic English chronology, which posits the third quarter of the tenth century as the period of transition from early to late. From a Scandinavian perspective the prime realizable political objective in the first Viking Age was a kingdom *in* England; in the second Viking Age it was the kingdom *of* England. In an exploration of the concept of two Viking Ages published in 1969, Sawyer drew a rather over-sharp distinction between a quest for land on which to settle in the earlier period and a quest for wealth, in the

earlier work by one of these editors, a much longer-term view was taken in D.M. Wilson, *The Vikings and their origins* (2nd ed. London, 1980). ¹⁴⁹ D. Whitelock (trans.), *English historical documents, c.500–1042*, 1 (2nd ed. London, 1968), p. 555. ¹⁵⁰ *ASC*, pp 124–5; H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, *The governance of mediaeval England from the conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp 42–5. ¹⁵¹ Knut IV, who had taken part in earlier expeditions against England in 1069 and 1075, was allied to Óláfr III of Norway and Robert of Flanders,

forms of tribute and pay, in the later period.¹⁵² This contradistinction did not find favour then or since, but the broad chronological division has a wider utility. In response to Sawyer's discussion paper, Dolley commented that the concept of two Viking Ages was applicable to western Europe in general, while from a Norman point of view Lucien Musset concurred.¹⁵³ Since 1969 Irish scholars have tended to see the middle of the tenth century as the time after which settled Scandinavians were essentially absorbed into native political processes, in the form of marital and military alliances, small-scale battles and grand coalitions, and eventually clientage of provincial kings.¹⁵⁴ The last great Viking raid out of Dublin was conducted in the Kells district in 951 and the long reign of Amlaíb Cúarán (Norse Óláfr *kváran*, 945–80) may be seen as a period of transition.¹⁵⁵ Its dramatic conclusion at the Battle of Tara, it has been suggested, symbolizes the end of Viking Dublin and its continuation as Hiberno-Norse Dublin.¹⁵⁶

As before, event-based history has to be set beside the claims of the process-based disciplines. An archaeological respondent in the 1969 debate observed that there was no hiatus in the tenth century in terms of the history of trading activity, or of Scandinavian contact with Britain, or of art styles.¹⁵⁷ The same point was made by the art historian Ole Klindt-Jensen.¹⁵⁸ The highly artificial construct based on the three centuries of the Viking Age by Johannes Brøndsted was rightly criticized by Musset.¹⁵⁹ Drawing all these considerations together, the best solution may be the simplest: to subdivide the Viking Age (c.790 to c.1100) into two roughly equal halves at c.950, and to label the one 'early' and the other 'late'. In many respects the early Viking Age (as here defined) is the classic period of Viking activity as it is normally conceived, whereas the late Viking Age was characterized by various forms of acculturation abroad and by progressive developments in the homelands evinced by state formation, town growth, mintage, and conversion to Christianity.¹⁶⁰ The two Viking Ages can be depicted in a more all-embracing manner than was done in 1969.

his brother-in-law. 152 P.H. Sawyer, 'The two Viking Ages of Britain: a discussion', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1969), 163–207 (including responses). 153 M. Dolley, "'The two Viking Ages of Britain': an Irish comment", *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1969), 179, 184–5; L. Musset, 'Les deux âges des Vikings: réflexions et observations d'un historien normand', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1969), 187–93. 154 Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans*, p. 104; F.J. Byrne and C. Doherty in *NHI*, ix, p. 100, n. 22 and map 22. 155 *AU*, s.a. 950. Amlaíb himself was in northern England at the time. 156 H.B. Clarke, 'Gaelic, Viking and Hiberno-Norse Dublin' in A. Cosgrove (ed.), *Dublin through the ages* (Dublin, 1988), p. 19. 157 A. Thorsteinsson, 'Comments on P.H. Sawyer, "The two Viking Ages of Britain"', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1969), 201–3. 158 O. Klindt-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in the British Isles', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 2 (1969), 193–5. 159 J. Brøndsted, *The Vikings*, trans. K. Skov (London, 1960), pp 45–118; Musset, 'Les deux âges des Vikings', p. 187, where the expressive phrase *à la queue-leu-leu*, 'in Indian file' is used. Viking activity was seen as having been concentrated in five main phases – 785–820, 835–65, 866–96, 900–26 and 980–1050 – in T.D. Kendrick, *A history of the Vikings* (London, 1930; repr. 1968), pp 6–8. 160 See the concluding remarks in Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, p. 206: 'the Viking period ... began when

BEFORE AND AFTER THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF

Where, then, does all of this leave the Battle of Clontarf, one of the most dramatic and indeed famous of Viking-Age contests? In terms of historical periodization the great battle belongs firmly to the late Viking Age, or in those of the English experience to the second Viking Age. In the year before, the kingdom of England had been taken over by the king of Denmark and his horse-mounted forces, while two years later a whole generation of Danish rule there commenced with the accession of Knut the Great. In terms of cultural identity Dublin itself had already entered on its Hiberno-Norse phase c.980 and would remain so for almost two centuries. Its king in 1014 was by birth half-Irish and half-Norse. It can be assumed that Sitriuc was bilingual in Irish and Norse, and developments during his long reign point both backwards to a more purely Scandinavian identity and forwards to an increasingly Irish one. In terms of social relationships there was the notable dimension of a family dispute that came to be highlighted in later Irish and Norse saga compositions. Here the central figure was not (male) Brian Bórama but (female) Gormlaith – a former and probably spurned wife, the manipulative sister of the rebellious king of Leinster and the solicitous mother of the equally rebellious king of Dublin. By 1014 cultural hybridization had long been evolving in Ireland and ‘Vikings’ were no longer what they once had been. King Sitriuc knew this only too well, which is why to saw fit to recruit real fighters from the Viking outback in Orkney and the Isle of Man. Even they, of course, turned out to be a match, but no more than a match, for the men of Munster when put to the test at Clontarf.

In purely military terms the Battle of Clontarf should not be assessed, as it so often is, in isolation from other pitched battles in the Viking Age.¹⁶¹ It was special in some respects, but far from being unprecedented. Clontarf struck contemporaries as being remarkable for particular reasons, especially the number of high-status casualties on both sides and the tragic death of the high-king of Ireland. Yet Brian Bórama was not the first high-king to be killed in battle by a Dublin-based army; in fact he was the third. The return of Vikings to Dublin in 917 had presented a big challenge that could not be ignored; accordingly the Northern Uí Néill high-king, Niall Glúndub, led a large force southwards two years later. The upshot was a major battle fought outside Dublin, just like Clontarf, at Islandbridge near a ford across the River Liffey. The northerners were defeated and Niall and other notables were killed. The Trinity College manuscript of the Annals of Ulster, in a marginal addendum, contains a moving lament comprising four quatrains.¹⁶² In the year 956 the Southern Uí Néill high-

the men of the west first became aware of the strangers of the north who came in search of land, wealth and glory. It ended when they were no longer strangers’. The second edition of 1971 was reformulated. ¹⁶¹ See an earlier account in Clarke, ‘Bloodied eagle’, pp 118–19.

¹⁶² *AU*, s.a. 918.

king, Congalath of Knowth, was ambushed on his return from a plundering expedition into Leinster. His assailants were ‘the foreigners of Áth Cliath’ and their Leinster allies, and Congalath became the second high-king to be killed by a Dublin-based army.¹⁶³ Another great tenth-century battle set a different precedent for Clontarf in the year 980. Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill had declared himself to be the high-king of Ireland and on this occasion the most immediate challenge came from the ageing king of Dublin, Amlaíb Cúarán (Sitriuc’s father). He had recruited, in advance, Vikings from the Northern and/or Western Isles of Scotland, just as his son would do in the winter of 1013–14. The Annals of Ulster record that ‘very great slaughter was inflicted on the foreigners’ and, in the opinion of that author, the Viking threat to his country had been eliminated or at the least contained.¹⁶⁴ The Battle of Glenn Máma in 999 foresaw Clontarf in yet another way, in that it was an unsuccessful joint Dublin–Leinster encounter, fought outside the town, against an army assembled by Brian Bórama.¹⁶⁵ In effect, not much that was genuinely new happened at Clontarf in the spring of 1014; only the scale was different.

Three other books of recent origin contain the words ‘the Battle of Clontarf’ in their title. The first of these, published by the Irish Texts Society, is a scholarly edition of a literary creation in Modern Irish.¹⁶⁶ An excellent introduction goes far to illuminate the nature and origins of the ‘popular’ conception of the great battle. Though a literary account in its own right, *Cath Cluana Tarbh* is ultimately dependent on the narrative of Middle Irish *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*. It also owes a debt to Geoffrey Keating’s *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*. Other relevant topics under consideration are the characterization of Gormlaith and Máel Sechnaill II, and the role of the supernatural. The second work is an historian’s re-evaluation of the Battle of Clontarf.¹⁶⁷ This comparatively short book provides a contextual portrait of Ireland in the age of Viking assaults, an account of Brian Bórama’s rise to prominence (as distinct from real power) as high-king of Ireland in 1002, a discussion of the international dimension to the lead-up to Clontarf and finally a description of the course of the fighting in so far as our sources allow it. Thirdly we now have a comprehensive reassessment in much greater detail and in particular an examination of the medieval primary texts.¹⁶⁸ The timing of the rebellion and the ensuing battle is linked to the Danish conquest of England, ‘when unparalleled numbers of Scandinavians and Insular troops and warships were at hand, battle-ready and confident of the new possibilities’.¹⁶⁹ Whatever the intentions of Jarl Sigurðr may have been, however,

¹⁶³ Ibid., s.a. 955. ¹⁶⁴ Ibid., s.a. 979. ¹⁶⁵ A. MacShamhráin, ‘The Battle of Glenn Máma, Dublin, and the high-kingship of Ireland: a millennial commemoration’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2000* (Dublin, 2001), pp 53–64. ¹⁶⁶ *Cath Cluana Tarbh: ‘The Battle of Clontarf’*, ed. M. Ní Úrdail (London, 2011). ¹⁶⁷ D. McGettigan, *The Battle of Clontarf, Good Friday, 1014* (Dublin, 2013). ¹⁶⁸ S. Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013). ¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 248.

it is impossible to accept the notion that a latterday Viking warlord who commanded the meagre resources of Orkney could have equalled the achievement of the ruler of Denmark who had inherited from his father a wealthy kingdom with a network of administrative and tax-gathering centres, including the now better understood royal site at Jelling in the middle of Jutland.¹⁷⁰

The present book ends with a question: why? This question relates to the failure of Vikings to conquer Ireland. One possible answer has been suggested before: 'that the rulers of Brega and of Leinster, despite the vicissitudes of the Viking Age, were successful in limiting by military means the territorial expansion of the Dublin Vikings and their Hiberno-Norse descendants'.¹⁷¹ Standard accounts by modern scholars of Viking raiding and of Viking warfare tend to build up a picture of inexorability and inevitability. Yet an analysis of the annalistic evidence for the engagements of Dublin-based Vikings with Irish armies has shown that, more often than not, the Irish were victorious.¹⁷² In the period 917–1014 at least twenty-five military engagements took place between Irish armies and Dublin ones, the latter sometimes containing native allies. Of these, the purely Irish forces won fifteen, most notably the battle fought at Tara in 980. In addition, between 936 and 1013 there were at least thirteen military assaults by Irish armies on Dublin itself, most of them successful.¹⁷³ Another partial answer to this question sounds unlikely at first sight, but may contain an element of historical truth – mutual respect. A country characterized by multiple kingship was fundamentally different from late Anglo-Saxon England or Carolingian Francia: competing native kings at all levels welcomed allies of any sort, including Viking ones, and had done so ever since the mid-ninth century. Irish written sources, despite the oft-quoted monkish observation in a Saint-Gall manuscript,¹⁷⁴ are less directly oppositional than their English and Frankish counterparts, perhaps because it was relatively common for Irishmen to fight side-by-side with Scandinavian allies.¹⁷⁵ A third part of the answer was provided by John Bradley, to the effect that the Vikings lacked the resources to conquer Ireland.¹⁷⁶ This was as true in 1014 as it always had been: a Viking conquest of Ireland, both before and after the Battle of Clontarf, was never in prospect.

¹⁷⁰ K.J. Krogh and B. Leth-Larsen, *Hedensk og Kristent: fundene fra den kongelige gravhøj i Jelling* (Copenhagen, 2011). ¹⁷¹ H.B. Clarke, 'Unsung heroes: the Irish and the Viking wars' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, p. 63. ¹⁷² Clarke, 'Bloodied eagle', pp 97–8, 105–7 and figs 1, 2. This applies both before and after the period of exile in 902–17. ¹⁷³ Ibid., pp 108–13 and fig. 3. ¹⁷⁴ For example, Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions*, p. 32. ¹⁷⁵ H.B. Clarke, 'The Vikings' in M. Keen (ed.), *Medieval warfare: a history* (Oxford, 1999), p. 40. ¹⁷⁶ Bradley, 'Interpretation of Scandinavian settlement', p. 78, n. 94.

Written sources for pre-Christian sanctuaries in northern Europe

SIGNE HORN FUGLESANG

Over the years, a number of highly competent specialists have discussed the sources for heathen rites and cult buildings in northern Europe. To make a new and limited attempt is consequently a risky proposition. Yet it may be interesting to see what light some of the written sources that survive from different areas may throw on especially Scandinavian rites and cult buildings.¹ In the present essay, I focus on a handful of written sources that are contemporary with the periods of conversion to Christianity, dating from the seventh to the eleventh century, relating to England, Scandinavia, the Continent, Russia and the western Slavic countries. Although some of these examples have at one time or another been used in Scandinavian discussion on Nordic temples, they have not previously been critically reviewed. It must be emphasized that a full catalogue of neither literary sources nor archaeological remains is intended below. Rather, the examples suggest a number of features common among the Germanic tribes – including the Scandinavians – immediately before the introduction of Christianity in the northern world.

One methodological problem that seems not to have been sufficiently addressed by previous scholars is that of textual copying. Any cathedral or major monastery would have a good library, where earlier texts were available for consultation and their narratives reused in new contexts. I shall return to some examples below. Another stumbling block is represented by the *topoi* on pagan sanctuaries in the Old Testament, which may be subsumed behind many of the ecclesiastical works. The emphasis on destruction of temples and idols recurs in papal instructions and missionaries' *vitae* throughout the period of christianization in northern Europe. It is difficult to determine the extent to which such formulae reflect real events or literary artifice. For there existed a strong literary, ecclesiastical tradition for this emphasis. The tradition of patristic and biblical wording goes back ultimately to the Old Testament:

¹ By concentrating on written evidence and buildings, I shall disregard recent discussions on archaeological evidence for rites and cult, including sacrifice of objects and weapons. For this discussion, see, for example, J. Lund, *Åsted og vadedsted: Deponeringer, genstandsikonografier og rumlig strukturering som kilde til vikingetidens kognitive landskaber* (Oslo, 2009).

Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess serve their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree; and ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place (Deut 12, 2–3; see also Deut 8, 4; Ex 34, 13; Lev 26, 1).²

Use of the formula ‘break down their temples and destroy their idols’ is frequent in the *vitae* of the missionary saints. It is also one of the many topical strands that recurs in the description of the conversion of Scandinavia that Adam of Bremen wrote in the 1070s. At the same time, pagan temples certainly existed and the problem of distinguishing theological topoi from historical description remains a thorny one.³ But Bede, Gregory, papal letters and the early saints’ Lives vary their wording and circumstances to an extent that seems unlikely if it had been merely a case of literary, theological artifice. Consequently, although the possibility of theological readings is strong, it seems to me that most of the sources may be taken to reflect the intermingling of metaphor and actual event.

ENGLAND

In his *History of the English church and people*, Bede presents two examples that throw light on different aspects of the question. In the advice that Pope Gregory sent to St Augustine in 601, transmitted by Augustine’s friend and follower Mellitus, the pope makes the famous suggestion that Anglo-Saxon temples should not be destroyed, but only the idols in them: ‘If the shrines are well built, it is essential that they should be changed from the worship of the devils to the service of the true God’.⁴ ‘If the shrines are well built ...’ seem to be the operative words and it reasonable to regard the pope’s suggestion not as a general injunction aimed at Germanic timbered temples, but rather in the context of contemporary discussions in Rome on the transformation of Roman stone temples in Italy and Gaul.⁵ Some such transformations may have taken place earlier, both in Gaul and in Rome itself, but a major change came in 608/9 shortly after Gregory’s death (604) when the Pantheon was consecrated as a church dedicated to the Holy Virgin. As far as I can see, there is no further suggestion on the transformation of Germanic temples by either Pope Gregory or his successors and, on balance, I suggest that we regard Pope Gregory’s words to St Augustine in 601 as a topical notion reflecting ongoing ecclesiastical deliberations in Italy.

2 S.H. Fuglesang, ‘Christian reliquaries and pagan idols’ in S. Kaspersen (ed.), *Images of cult and devotion* (Copenhagen, 2004), pp 14–15. 3 Ibid. 4 *Bedae Historiam ecclesiasticam gentis Anglorum*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1896), p. 65. 5 Fuglesang, ‘Christian reliquaries’, p. 16.

In the same letter the pope also advises Augustine to substitute Christian feasts such as martyrs' feast-days or the dedication anniversary of the church for the heathen practice of sacrificing beasts to their gods. The animals may still be killed, but now for food and in praise of God with gratitude for all his gifts. In our context, the main point is the heathen animal sacrifices – an extremely widespread practice in northern Europe.

Bede's next example of an English temple occurs in 627, with the history of the conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria.⁶ The king's heathen priest Coifi converted with him and followed up his conversion by burning down his own temple, precinct and altars. 'The site where these idols once stood is still shown, not far east of York, beyond the River Derwent, and is known today as Goodmanham.' Coifi's temple and enclosure seem to have been made of wood, but nothing further can be said about shape or size. Bede also records other, probably wooden, temples as having been restored on the apostasy of the West Saxons in 665.⁷

THE CONTINENT

Contemporary historians and missionary *vitae* document both temples and idols among the Germanic tribes, but are sadly lacking in descriptions.⁸ According to Strabo, the Irish St Gall (d. c.630) had, for example, destroyed statues in the temple he had pulled down at Tuggensee in Switzerland, and Gregory of Tours mentions that Bishop Gall of Clermont (d. c.551) burnt down a temple with wooden ex-votos near Cologne.⁹

In the eighth century, the *vitae* of St Willibrord (658–739) and St Boniface (c.675–754) amplify the examples in other directions. We learn no particulars of a temple on the island sacred to the Frisian god Fosite, but stress is laid on Willibrord's using the spring there to baptize three people and slaughtering sacred cattle to feed his men. The local king was furious and cast three lots a day for three days in order to find out who should die as a result of the insult to the god.¹⁰ The practice of casting lots was common to all Germanic tribes and I shall return to one of the Scandinavian examples in connection with Anskar's mission to Birka.

According to the Life of St Boniface, a rising of the Frisians led to the rebuilding of pagan shrines and worship of idols. More informative to cult and rites is the account that some of the converted people in the region of Hesse

6 *Bedae Historiam ecclesiasticam*, bk II, ch. 13. 7 Ibid., bk III, ch. 30; Fuglesang, 'Christian reliquaries', pp 16–17. 8 A number of these sources have been conveniently collected in V. Flint, *The rise of magic in early medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 1991) and D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon paganism* (London, 1992). 9 For these and further examples, see Flint, *Rise of magic*, esp. pp 209–11. 10 Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon paganism*, p. 40.

‘continued secretly, some openly, to offer sacrifices to trees and springs, to inspect the entrails of victims; some practised divination, legerdemain and incantations; some turned their attentions to auguries, auspices and other sacrificial rites’. Many of these rites are known also from England and were condemned by penitentials.¹¹ One famous incident in Boniface’s work in Germany was his felling of the sacred tree at Geismar near Fritzlar: ‘a certain oak of extraordinary size called by the pagans of olden times the Oak of Jupiter [Thor/Thunor]’. After Boniface had cut the first notch, a mighty wind felled the tree. Boniface went on to cut the tree into timber with which he had built an oratory dedicated to St Peter. This is the only explicit mention I have found of a church being built on the site of a pagan cult and in this case the situation was extraordinary. The anecdote suggests, however, that the church building was small and was raised quickly. As will be seen shortly, the same is suggested in Rimbert’s *Life of Anskar* in Sweden a century later.

RUSSIA

The Arab ambassador Ibn Fadlan met with Rus merchants on the Volga in 921 and in his subsequent report he relates two incidents that provide an insight into heathen practices.¹² They are normally taken to reflect contemporary Scandinavian customs, although an acculturation with Slavic usage cannot be excluded. One is the famous description of the funeral of a chieftain. It included much drinking and ritual sexual orgies with the slave girl destined to be killed and buried with her owner. The ceremony, which took several days, climaxed with the burning of the funeral ship with its contents of grave chamber and belongings of the deceased – including slave girl and animals. On Ibn Fadlan’s question on the reasons for the cremation, he was answered through his interpreter that in this way the chieftain would go directly to his gods.

The other incident related by Ibn Fadlan concerns Rus merchants’ practice when they arrived at a landing or marketplace. Adjacent to their rest-house was a raised pole with a man’s face roughly carved and next to it smaller figures and raised poles. The merchants called the largest pole the father of the family of gods and commenced by sacrificing bread, onions, meat, milk and alcohol to him, requesting his help for successful business.¹³ If unsuccessful, the merchant would sacrifice to the whole family of gods in turn, continuing until his luck changed. When successful, he would slaughter sheep or cows, carrying some of

¹¹ Ibid., pp 37–8. ¹² For translation and commentaries, especially a succinct evaluation on the ethnicity of the Rus, see J.E. Montgomery, ‘Ibn Fadlan and the Rusiyyah’, *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 3 (2000), also available at www.uib.no/jais/voo3/montgo1.pdf. Norwegian trans. in H. Birkeland, *Nordens historie i middelalderen etter arabiske kilder* (Oslo, 1954), pp 17–24. ¹³ Montgomery, ‘Ibn Fadlan and the Rusiyyah’.

the sacrifice to the idols and feasting on the remainder. The sacrificed meat would invariably disappear during the night and the Arab comments on the merchant's credulity in believing that the gods had eaten it, since to Ibn Fadlan it was obvious that it had been devoured by the wild dogs. The sacrifice proper was conducted outdoors; other parts of Ibn Fadlan's description of their customs indicate that the Rus used their house for feasting, sleeping and sex.

Ibn Fadlan's observation on the sacrifice of meat resembles the custom that al-Tartushi describes from Hedeby (Haithabu) in the middle of the tenth century:

[The inhabitants] have a feast where all get together to honour the gods and to eat and drink. The man who slaughters a sacrificial animal builds a wooden scaffold at the door to his house and places the sacrificed animal on it, whether it is an ox or a ram or a goat or a pig. Then the people know that he has sacrificed to honour his god.¹⁴

The sacrifice described by Ibn Fadlan also corresponds to a sacrifice by the Rus, related in chapter 9 of *De administrando imperio*, written probably in 944.¹⁵ After having safely navigated down the rapids of the River Dnieper and reached the island of St Gregory,

they perform their sacrifices because a gigantic oak-tree stands there; and they sacrifice live cocks. Arrows, too, they peg about. And others bread and meat, or something of whatever each may have, as is their custom. They also throw lots regarding the cocks, whether to slaughter them, or to eat them as well, or to leave them alive.

Ibn Fadlan is an important source for several reasons – he is a close observer, with mildly ironic comments, on practices regarding both burial rites and idols. He is in fact the only source to describe rites connected with both these aspects of cult. There may be some doubt on whether his Rus accurately reflect Scandinavian practices, or whether they should rather be regarded as a mixture of Scandinavian and Slav.¹⁶ Comparisons with indigenous Scandinavian graves, however, argue for a fairly direct line with Scandinavia of the mid-Viking period.

¹⁴ Birkeland, *Nordens historie i middelalderen*, pp 103–4. My trans. from the Norwegian.

¹⁵ D. Obolensky, 'The Byzantine sources on Scandinavians in eastern Europe' in K. Hannestad (ed.), *Varangian problems: report on the first international symposium on the theme 'The eastern connections of the Nordic peoples in the Viking period and early Middle Ages'* (Copenhagen, 1970), p. 158. As Obolensky observes, however, one cannot exclude elements of Slavic customs in this description. ¹⁶ For a clear summing up of this problem, see Montgomery, 'Ibn Fadlan and the Rusiyyah'.

THE WEST SLAVS

The evidence for buildings and priesthood in West Slavic paganism contrasts dramatically with that of the Germanic peoples in the west. For one thing, the accounts for the Slavs are much later. The main contemporary source is Thietmar, bishop of Merseburg (975–1018). In book VI of his *Chronicon*, begun in 1012, Thietmar describes one of the wars that King Henry II (1002–24, emperor from 1014) conducted against the Polish king Boleslav. In this war Henry used a group of pagan Wends as mercenaries and in this connection Thietmar describes the main temple of the Wends:

There is a three-sided enclosure called Riedegost, which has three entries and is surrounded on all sides by a thick forest which is considered sacred. Two of the entries are open to anybody who wants to enter. The third entry, that in the east, is the smallest and opens on a narrow road which leads to a sinister lake. Within the enclosure itself is only a sacred building made of wood, with various animals [carved] on the corners. The outside is decorated with well-carved images of gods and goddesses. Within the sacred building stand carved images of gods with helmets and coats of mail and with their names engraved. They look terrifying. The most important and the largest one is named Swarozyc and all the pagans prefer him and worship him. Here are also all the banners of the districts which are fetched in the temple and carried by the footsoldiers when they go to war.¹⁷

Thietmar also describes a proper priesthood – a group of men unknown from the Germanic west. Furthermore, there were local temples in the districts, again an organization unknown in the pagan west. Both the priesthood and the organization in one superior, central temple, and less important temples in the districts, seem to have been modelled on Christian ecclesiastical organization.

SCANDINAVIA

The earliest attempt to christianize Scandinavia is ascribed to St Willibrord, who in the early eighth century went to Denmark from Frisia.¹⁸ He did not succeed in converting the local king, but brought back with him thirty Danish boys whom he baptized and taught, presumably intending them to go back and work

¹⁷ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, bk 6, ch. 23, ed. W. Trillmich (Darmstadt, 1985; repr. 2002). My trans. from the German. For the dating of the *Chronicon*, see K. Leyser, *Communications and power in medieval Europe: the Carolingian and Ottonian centuries*, ed. T. Reuter (London, 1994), pp 27–8. ¹⁸ Alcuin, *Vita sancti Willibrordi*, bk 9, ed. W. Levison

as missionaries in their own country. The earliest successful conversion is documented in 822–3 when Archbishop Ebo of Reims (813–35) went to Denmark and there baptized a number of Danes.¹⁹ Shortly afterwards, in 826, the Danish king Harald Klak was baptized with all his family and men at Ingelheim near Mainz, with Emperor Louis the Pious as his godfather.²⁰ Following these two events the monk Anskar from Corbie was sent as a missionary first to Denmark in 826 and to Sweden two years later. In both countries he stayed in the main towns – Hedeby in Denmark and Birka in Sweden.²¹

In Hedeby, Anskar and his companion Autbert spent two successful years converting pagans and establishing a school for boys who were educated in Christianity, before returning to Corbie (Rimbert, ch. 8). The Swedes in the meantime had sent ambassadors to the emperor asking him to send them priests. Anskar was again willing and sailed for Sweden with a companion Witmar. At sea they were attacked by pirates who took the ship and all it contained, while the passengers barely got away with their lives. In this way we get indirectly to know that, among the many gifts and ecclesiastical objects they brought with them, the missionaries also carried almost forty books – by any standard a fairly extensive library in the early ninth century (ch. 10). After a long and difficult journey on foot, the missionaries reached Birka and were welcomed by the king who, after consulting with his men, permitted them to preach. The town's reeve, Hergeir, was baptized and immediately built a church – the first documented church building in Scandinavia. In addition to the Swedes who converted, we learn that there were a great number of foreign prisoners – presumably slaves – who were already Christian and who could now take part in the services and receive the Eucharist (ch. 11). After a year-and-a-half in Birka, Anskar and Witmar returned to Francia, bringing with them among other things 'a letter of the king's own hand, written in the peculiar manner of the Swedes' – that is, in runes.²²

At this point Rimbert's history of Anskar becomes a piece of political statement. He relates how the emperor at a synod established Hamburg as the archdiocese for all the land north of the Elbe, with special responsibility for consecrating bishops and priests 'in the northern countries'. Anskar was confirmed as archbishop by the pope, who recognized his power over the Swedes, Danes, Slavs and 'other peoples in the north', together with Archbishop Ebo of Reims. But Hamburg was an outpost of the Carolingian Empire, lying on the coast of Saxony, and in 845 the town was burnt down completely by Vikings.²³

(Hanover, 1920). ¹⁹ *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. G.H. Pertz and F. Kurze (Hanover, 1895), s.a. 823. ²⁰ Ibid., s.a. 826; Ermold the Black, *In honorem Hludowici Pii*, ed. E. Faral (Paris, 1932; repr. 1964). ²¹ Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. W. Trillmich (Berlin, 1961; repr. Darmstadt, 2000). ²² Ibid., ch. 12. Trillmich argues against this interpretation of *litteris regia manu more ipsorum deformatis*, stating that *sicherlich kein Schreiben und keine Runen*, 'surely no writing and no runes' (ibid., p. 42, n. 59). ²³ *The Annals of Fulda*, ed. T. Reuter (Manchester, 1992), s.a. 845.

Anskar himself barely got away with his life and the relics of the cathedral (ch. 16). The destruction of Hamburg posed a problem for both the church and the emperor, and in order to solve it the emperor and a synod of bishops decided to reorganize the dioceses of Werden, Bremen and Hamburg. Anskar was given Bremen in 847; the next year a further reorganization took place and finally the pope gave official recognition to the establishment of Hamburg and Bremen as one archdiocese (chs 22–3). I have gone into these details since they provide much of the background for Adam of Bremen's account in the 1070s of the history of the archdiocese. In fact, the legalities of the establishment and responsibilities of Hamburg and of its union with Bremen lie at the heart of much of the ecclesiastical politics of Germany in the mid-eleventh century when the archbishop of Hamburg–Bremen came to be a leading force in the investiture dispute between emperor and pope.

Returning now to the history of the conversion of the Swedes, it is surprising how easily the initial phases of christianization took place according to Rimbert's *Life of Anskar*. But the later developments were not equally peaceful. In the early 830s, Anskar and Ebo sent a relation of Ebo, Gautbert, as bishop to Sweden, where he was kindly received by both the king and the people, and allowed to build a church (ch. 14). Some years later, however, the Swedes reacted, took Gautbert captive, killed one of his assistants, robbed his house and chased the priests 'away from their country' (ch. 17). Rimbert emphasizes that this took place without the king's knowledge and moreover that the perpetrators were punished by God and that the Christian community continued in Birka. For almost seven years the town was without a priest, until Anskar sent the hermit Ardgar to take care of the community. But after the death of the reeve Hergeir, Ardgar returned to Francia and Birka remained without a priest until Anskar came back on his third visit to Scandinavia in 852. On this occasion, the Danish king Hårik, who was a Christian, sent a message to his Swedish colleague King Olof announcing the arrival of Anskar and asking the Swedish king to let him establish the Christian religion.

It is on this occasion that we get the anecdote on the building of a pagan temple in Birka. A man came to King Olof and delivered a long message from the heathen gods. Among other things the gods stated that they had long helped the Swedes who believed in them and sacrificed to them. But they would not accept a new god to reign over them. If the Swedes insisted on having more gods, the old gods would accept the late King Erik as one of them. This message from the old gods came at the time when Anskar was expected and caused consternation among the people, who promptly built a temple to King Erik.

The further story throws some light on the manner in which kings might bring their people to accept Christianity – through consultation in the assembly and through the casting of lots. In the case of King Olof, he first consulted with his leading men, went with them out on a field 'as usual' and threw lots, which

turned out positive for Anskar. The assembly itself is specified as taking place in the town of Birka, with all men taking part. The reactions varied, but an old man rose to speak in favour of Christianity; the old gods of the Swedes had proved to be of little avail, whereas the Christian god could prove to be very useful. On this argument, the people decided that there should be Christian priests and sacraments among them. Further legalities were necessary, however: the king must present the case to yet another assembly in another part of the country (ch. 27). When the answer even there was positive, the king permitted the presence of priests on a permanent basis and donated ground for a church building, while Anskar consecrated a new priest and bought a plot for his house. Later, there were to be constant difficulties in finding new priests for Sweden, but that is another story.

While all this went on in Sweden, the affairs in Denmark had taken a turn for the worse. Anskar again stepped in and with the help of the new king there, Hårik the Younger, built churches and invested priests in both Hedeby and Ribe. When Anskar died in 865, things seemed to be on an even keel in Denmark and Sweden.

The country that Rimbert never mentions is Norway. Possibly the south of Norway was part of Denmark in the early ninth century, which might account for the omission in Rimbert. But the first Christian king in Norway was apparently Håkon the Good (933–59), the son of Harald Finehair. Snorri relates that Håkon had been brought up at the court of King Æthelstan of England (924–39) and had been baptized there. There is no English source that confirms this, but it is highly probable since other young men from abroad were either trained at the English court or lived there as hostages.²⁴

Thietmar of Merseburg is among the sources for both Scandinavia and the West Slavs. In his *Chronicon* he tells how King Henry I (the Fowler) of Saxony (919–36) forced the Danes and Norwegians under their king Gnupa to become Christian.²⁵ Thietmar may here have embroidered a little on Widukind's briefer information.²⁶ But it is in this connection that Thietmar relates the story of the big sacrifice in Lejre on Sjælland, in January every nine years. According to him, 'everybody' came together there and sacrificed ninety-nine each of men, horses, dogs and cocks in order to serve the gods of the underworld. The historicity of this story has not won great acceptance in modern scholarship, but it has been pointed out that Thietmar's text may lie behind Adam of Bremen's description of the sacrifice at Uppsala. Thietmar's Lejre sacrifice, however, could also be understood in the light of the meat sacrifices that al-Tartushi describes in

24 R. Page, 'The audience of *Beowulf* and the Vikings' in C. Chase (ed.), *The dating of Beowulf* (Toronto, 1997), pp 113–22. 25 Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, bk I, ch. 17. 26 Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, ed. A. Bauer and R. Rau (Darmstadt, 1971), bk I, ch. 40 on the baptism of Knuba who may, according to Rau, have been a sub-king in Schleswig (ibid., p. 79, n. 110).

Hedeby at a slightly later date and which seem to have been private rather than official sacrifices.

Under Henry's son, Otto I (936–73, emperor from 962) the priest Poppo arrived at the court of Harald Gormson in Denmark, berated him and his people for their apostasy and by the ordeal of carrying hot iron converted the king to Christianity.²⁷ Again Widukind would seem to be the primary source, echoed by Thietmar. Both authors by inference date the conversion to c.963–5.²⁸ Neither Widukind nor Thietmar mentions a possible pagan Danish temple and it is still debated whether the post-holes found under Harald's church in Jelling should be interpreted as the remains of church(es) or hall(s).²⁹

Adam of Bremen wrote his *Gesta hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* in the 1070s; its main redaction had probably been finished by 1076.³⁰ He had visited Denmark and had been well informed by King Svend Estridsen (1046–74); it is normally assumed that much of his information on the contemporary Danish church is correct. But his description of Sweden and Norway and their rulers is highly misleading. In the context of sanctuaries, it is the description of the temple at Gamla Uppsala that is the most interesting.³¹ The very existence of such a temple is in doubt and modern archaeological excavations at Uppsala have so far not uncovered any remains datable to the eleventh century or, for that matter, any monumental building of the Viking period.³² The remains of structures under the present, Romanesque church and the very impressive halls on the terrace are all pre-Viking. Carl Hallencreutz – who, by the way, does not disbelieve the existence of a temple in Uppsala – has pointed out the dualism that forms a basic element in Adam's work and I have further emphasized this part in a previous paper on idols.³³ As mentioned, Adam has used several details

27 Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, bk 2, ch. 14; Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, bk III, ch. 65. 28 The main source for dating the conversion of the Danes is Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, bk III, ch. 65, which is dedicated at 967/8 to Matilda, the daughter of Otto I. The dating is further corroborated by Ruotger, who places the conversion of the Danes in the time of Archbishop Bruno of Cologne (953–65). For the dating of bk III of the *Res gestae Saxonicae*, see Bauer and Rau, p. 8, n. 20; Leyser, *Communications and power*, p. 27. See also A.E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark* (Copenhagen, 1969), p. 227. 29 K.J. Krogh, 'The royal Viking-Age monuments at Jelling in the light of recent archaeological excavations: a preliminary report', *Acta Archaeologica*, 53 (1982), 183–216. 30 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. W. Trillmich (Berlin, 1961; repr. Darmstadt, 2000), p. 139. 31 Ibid., pp 470–4; E. Nordahl, ... *templum quod Ubsola dicitur ... i arkeologisk belysning* (Uppsala, 1996); A. Hultgård, 'Från ögonvitnenskildring till retorik. Adam av Bremens notiser om Uppsalakulten i religionshistorisk belysning' in *Uppsalakulten och Adam av Bremen* (Uppsala, 1997), pp 9–50, esp. pp 32–4. 32 The recent excavations in Gamla Uppsala show that the great hall (50m long) on the southern terrace was probably built around 600 and went out of use around 800. The houses on the northern terrace seem to date from the late sixth to the early eighth century and appear to have been used for craftworking (J. Ljungkvist, 'Monumentaliseringen av Gamla Uppsala' in O. Sundqvist and P. Vikstrand (eds), *Gamla Uppsala i ny belysning* (Gävle, 2013), pp 55–6). 33 C.F. Hallencreutz, 'Missionsstrategi och

that may have been based on Thietmar's *Chronicon*. The more important probable loans are Thietmar's description of the Wendish temple and its idols, which has its counterpart in Adam's description of the temple at Uppsala with three idols and Thietmar's description of the great sacrifices at Lejre every nine years, which may be seen as a background for Adam's description of the annual winter sacrifices at Uppsala.³⁴

Another important element in evaluating Adam as a source for Scandinavian history is the political situation in Germany around the middle of the eleventh century.³⁵ Henry IV (1056–1105) strongly opposed the reforms of Hildebrand, later Pope Gregory VII (1073–85), reforms that included among other things greater freedom of the church from the lay powers – a reform symbolically centred on the king's right to invest bishops. The German archbishops and bishops sided with the king against the pope. In the ensuing debacle between Germany and the pope, the Danish king seems to have taken the opportunity to attempt a transfer of the archdiocese of Scandinavia from Hamburg–Bremen to Lund. This would of course have reduced the power of Hamburg–Bremen seriously and Adam's history of the archdiocese must be read also in this light. It is a piece of propaganda for German ecclesiastical supremacy, which aims to demonstrate that paganism in the north was still strong and could be overcome only by the constant surveillance from Hamburg–Bremen. Adam consequently argues that the Scandinavian peninsula had only very recently converted to Christianity, through the work of Hamburg–Bremen. In this context, Uppsala became a strong literary symbol.

Sighvat Skald's *Austrfararvísur* may be an independent source to paganism in Värmland or Västergötland around 1020.³⁶ Sighvat was on an embassy from King Olav Haraldson to the Swedish king. Late one night he and his followers arrived at a farm (*hof*) where the door was closed. Trying to enter, Sighvat was told that the people were holding an *alfa blót*, that they were heathens, feared the wrath of Odin, and sent the travellers on their way. There are no details and the very fact that Sighvat and his men were sent away might suggest that the *blót* was no longer a commonly accepted occurrence in the region. Normally, the event is taken as an indication of heathendom in the inner, western parts of Sweden

religionstolkning. Till frågan om Adam av Bremen och Uppsalatemplet' in A. Hultgård (ed.), *Uppsalakultuten och Adam av Bremen* (Uppsala, 1997), pp 117–30; Fuglesang, 'Christian reliquaries', pp 18–20. 34 Arguments for accepting the historicity of Adam's text are given in Sundqvist and Vikstrand, *Gamla Uppsala*, 69–72. A.-S. Gräslund suggests that there was an older oral tradition that King Svend Estridson of Denmark may have told to Adam ('Kristna inslag i Gamla Uppsala och dess närområde' in Sundqvist and Vikstrand (eds), *Gamla Uppsala i ny belysning*, p. 131). 35 H. Janson, *Templum nobilissimum: Adam av Bremen, Uppsalatemplet och konfliktlinjerna i Europa kring 1075* (Gothenburg, 1998), esp. pp 261–76. Although in my opinion he exaggerates the symbolic aspects of Adam's textual Uppsala, Janson has the credit of being the first to focus on Adam's *Gesta*, bk IV in its European political context. 36 Sighvatr Þórðarson, *Austrfararvísur*, ed. F. Jónsson (Oslo, 1932), vv 4–5.

around 1020. In any case, the rite takes place in the main house on the farm, not in a separate temple building. The incident also emphasizes Ian Wood's conclusion that 'public paganism collapsed ... once a region ceased to be ruled by pagans – but ... private superstition proved very much harder to extirpate'.³⁷

The early Scandinavian laws provide little that is relevant to the shape and functions of pagan temples. But the wording in the Gulathing law, which is the oldest surviving law text, in its present redaction from c.1163 or earlier, gives some indications on pagan customs.³⁸ Chapter 28 forbids fortune-telling, sorcery, witchcraft and so-called *galdresong*. The fortune-telling corresponds to the casting of lots and the reading of animal entrails, which were common, pan-Germanic customs prohibited by the church. The next chapter is more interesting: it prohibits *blot*, that is, sacrifices to pagan gods and at mounds and *horg*. The mounds are usually assumed to be grave-mounds, indicating sacrifices and rites connected with ancestors. *Horg* is a word that occurs also in Old English and Old German, and probably means a simple wooden building of some sort. Both interpretations are implied by a later sentence in this chapter that condemns the man who makes 'a mound or builds a house and calls it *horg* or raises a pole and calls it *skaldstong*'. The *skaldstong* may be identified as the kind of roughly carved poles that Ibn Fadlan records as idols of Rus merchants in 922. Later laws, both Norwegian and Swedish, repeat some of the same prohibitions against heathen practices. But on the whole, the laws are fairly general in specifying mound and tree and grove and spring, without further details.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SCANDINAVIA

In the Scandinavian archaeological material, neither temple and enclosure nor idols have so far been identified. And although the terms *fanum* and *templum* in Latin and *horg* and *hov* in Norse are used in contexts that clearly indicate them as buildings, they are not followed by descriptive words that might indicate shape or function. Recently, a small rectangular building within a separate enclosure at the hall at Tisso in Denmark has been tentatively interpreted as the cult building of the local chieftain.³⁹ This interpretation may have been suggested by the building's place, which bears a superficial resemblance to that of early Romanesque private churches. Although it cannot be excluded that this building and precinct may have had a cultic function, other possible functions for the building should be checked – for example, that of private quarters for the magnate's family.

37 I. Wood, *The missionary life: saints and the evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (London, 2001), p. 255. 38 L. Larson, *The earliest Norwegian laws: being the Gulathing law and the Frostathing law* (New York, 1935; repr. 2008). 39 J. Jensen, *Danmarks oldtid*, iv: *Yngre*

To the extent that *Beowulf* (whatever its date) is relevant for understanding the functions of a hall, it should be noted that the Scyldings' mead-hall Heorot was used primarily for banquets and sleeping-quarters for the king's men.⁴⁰ In the latter case, the hall was cleared of benches after the banquet and beds were set up with bedding (lines 1239–40). The king and his queen are specifically mentioned as having private quarters (lines 662–5, 1310–11), as is Beowulf with his golden gifts after his victory over Grendel (lines 1299–1300), and earlier in the poem, when still under the threat of Grendel, many of the king's men had found other sleeping-quarters (lines 138–40). Thus clearly there were many possible functions of separate, smaller buildings in the area of a hall.

The intermingling of secular and religious power in pre-Christian and early Christian Scandinavia is difficult to sort out; this is a problem where the paucity of written sources is perhaps most acutely felt. The older theory that Norwegian stave churches were descendants of Scandinavian pagan temples has long since been discarded. The basic and critical study, *Hörg, hov og kirke*, that Olaf Olsen published in 1966 still stands, in spite of some opposition, and is further supported by Claus Ahrens' 1981 and 2001 substantial publications of early wooden churches in northern Europe. Today, it is generally assumed that cult and rites took place mainly outdoors, at memorial mounds and barrows, at springs and trees and groves, and in the hall of the king or a local magnate.

The Scandinavian hall appears to have been developed in the seventh century from the older, multifunctional long-house, which combined living area with cow-shed, barn etc.⁴¹ The multifunctional 'long-house' continued as a building type for villages and farms throughout the Viking period. But the 'hall' as a distinctively aristocratic seat largely shed the utility functions and emphasized a spacious living area as the ceremonial centre of the building. Typically, the interior of the hall was aisled by huge roof-carrying posts, which were spaced to leave a large free area around the hearth. Its size could be astounding: at Tissø on Sjælland in Denmark the hall that was built c.700 was, for example, 36m long and 11.5m broad.⁴²

In addition to its size and position, the remains of artefacts found in a hall also highlight the social position of its owner – fragments of imported glass and precious metalwork. The building's size, shape and dominating position in the landscape further emphasized it as the seat of the powerful magnate of an estate. These characteristics followed the hall as a building type for aristocracy, whether it was situated at Lejre in Denmark, at Uppsala in Sweden or at Borg in northern Norway. Another characteristic of the hall as it had developed by

jernalder og vikingetid 400–1050 (Copenhagen, 2006), pp 302–3 and n. 99. ⁴⁰ *The Beowulf manuscript: complete text and The Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. and trans. R.D. Fulk (Cambridge, MA, 2010). ⁴¹ F. Herschend, 'The origin of the hall in southern Scandinavia', *Tor*, 25 (1994), 175–99; Jensen, *Danmarks oldtid*, pp 165–79; G.S. Munch (ed.), *Borg i Lofoten. A chieftain's farm in north Norway* (Trondheim, 2003). ⁴² Jensen, *Danmarks oldtid*, pp 167–8.

around the year 700 was its permanency of location. Through the centuries, until the building type went out of use in the eleventh century, a hall was repaired and rebuilt several times; it could be enlarged or contracted, but its location, plan and basic building techniques remained surprisingly constant. It is now commonly assumed that the hall had multiple functions: it could be a magnate's residence and his representative quarters for administrative and religious events, and it certainly proclaimed its owner's power and prestige. To judge from the ringforts at Trelleborg, Aggersborg and Fyrkat, and the halls recently excavated at the northern palisade of the royal centre at Jelling – all from the time of King Harald Gormson – the hall also served as prestigious living and barrack quarters for the king's men.⁴³ This evidence fits in nicely with the descriptions in *Beowulf* cited above.

The hall at Uppåkra in Skåne, modern Sweden, is unique in being the only building that may have been intended for cultic purposes.⁴⁴ This 'high house' had been used and rebuilt to the same design and size from the late Roman Iron Age to the early Viking period and contained artefacts suggesting ceremonial feasts that probably had religious connotations.

The importance of the hall is implied by the information on sacrificial offerings, meagre though it is. Disregarding Thietmar's and Adam's extraordinary claims for ninety-nine sacrificial victims of all species, it can safely be said that food and drink were the central ingredients of a sacrifice, whether in England of the seventh or among the Rus and Scandinavians of the tenth century. A portion of bread, meat and drink was offered to the gods or the idols or the forefather(s) or the spirits of nature in tree or spring, as reported by Ibn Fadlan on the Rus and al-Tartushi on the people of Hedeby. But the remainder of the sacrificial food was consumed by the man who performed the sacrifice, his retainers and his family. The ensuing feast would presumably take place indoors, whether in an aristocratic hall or a farmer's long-house.

A final category to be considered in a discussion on sanctuaries is the assembly. In addition to the hall, the assembly site has recently been interpreted as a possible sanctuary.⁴⁵ This interpretation rests primarily on a runic inscription at Oklunda, Östergötland, of the early or mid-Viking period, which

43 M.D. Jessen et al., 'Kongens gård i Jelling? – et nyt anlæg fra Harald Blåtands tid' in Nationalmuseet, *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 2011* (Copenhagen, 2011), pp 60–73. 44 L. Larsson and K.-M. Lenntorp, 'The enigmatic house' in L. Larsen (ed.), *Continuity for centuries* (Stockholm, 2004), pp 3–48. I disregard here the building at Borg in Östergötland that has at times been interpreted as a cult building (K. Lindeblad, 'Borgs socken – förändringar i tid och rum' in L. Lundqvist et al. (eds), *Slöinge och Borg. Stormansgårdar i öst och väst* (Stockholm, 1996), pp 63–70). The archaeological remains there – unburnt animal bones and finished and half-finished 'Thor's rings' of iron – seem more consistent with a combined smithy and slaughterhouse, although some possible connection with local rites cannot be excluded. 45 S. Brink, 'Law and legal customs in Viking-Age Scandinavia' in J. Jesch (ed.), *The Scandinavians: from the Vendel period to the tenth century* (Woodbridge, 2002),

according to Stefan Brink can be translated thus: ‘Gunnar cut this, cut these runes. And he fled guilty [of homicide], sought this pagan cult site (*vi*). And he has a clearance thereafter, and he tied the Vi-Finn (*vifin*)’. The inscription and the interpretation are under discussion, but according to Brink the most likely solution is that the inscription dates from the early ninth century and concerns a fugitive seeking asylum at an assembly place.⁴⁶ Against this theory it should be noted that the most famous Upplandic inscriptions identifying assembly sites – commemorating respectively Ulf at Bällsta and Jarlabanki at Tensta – lack any implication that the assembly might be identified as a cult place.⁴⁷ That it could provide occasional safety for a fugitive seems rather to emphasize the assembly’s main role as a court of law, whether presided over by a king or a local magnate.

But even if the assembly place was not a sanctuary in the strict sense of the word, it provided the scene not only for processes of law but also for decisions on religion. This function must have rested on very old traditions, although the written evidence from Scandinavia concerns mainly the role that the assemblies played in the conversion to Christianity. In Uppland, the king must ask two assemblies – one of them at Birka, the other at an unspecified location – for permission to let Anskar preach. In Iceland, Christianity was accepted as the official religion at the Althing. In Norway, the Gulathing law is the source for the role of the Moster assembly (*c.* 1020) in christianization.

The close connection between ‘official’ christianization and assembly place is suggested also by Jelling in Jutland in the 960s. Harald Gormson caused to be built an assemblage of four monuments there. The north mound containing the pagan grave-chamber of his father is dendro-dated to 958–9. The church was built presumably immediately after the conversion in *c.* 965. The runic memorial to commemorate his parents, himself and his converting the Danes to Christianity has no such precise date, but is normally taken to have been erected in the 960s, soon after the conversion. The south mound was built in several phases dendro-dated to the 970s, probably before 974.⁴⁸ The purpose of the

pp 87–127. ⁴⁶ Ibid., pp 93–6. Brink’s further argument rests on a tenuous variety of place-names and etymology. ⁴⁷ The only surviving assembly place clearly marked in the ground, at Bällsta near Lake Vallentuna in Uppland, Sweden, was built by his wife and sons in memory of Ulf according to the inscription on the two runestones of the early eleventh century (U225, cross-marked, and U226). U225 says: ‘[Ulvkel] and Arnkell and Gye they made here assembly place ... no monument shall be greater than [that which] Ulf’s sons raised after [him], able men after their father. Gunnar carved the stone’ and U226: ‘They raised stones and the stave also the high to honour. Also Gyrid loved her husband. Therefore he will be remembered with tears. Gunnar carved the stone’. Unfortunately, poetry and alliteration are lost in my translation from the Swedish transcription, but there is nothing in this inscription to suggest that the assembly place denoted anything more than memorial and status. See also S.H. Fuglesang, ‘Swedish runestones of the eleventh century: ornament and dating’ in K. Düwel (ed.), *Runeninschriften als Quellen interdisziplinärer Forschung* (Berlin, 1998), p. 202 and references. ⁴⁸ E. Roesdahl, ‘Harald Blauzahn – ein dänischer Wikingerkönig aus archäologischer Sicht’ in

south mound has not been definitely established. It had never contained a grave, but its top was flattened, and Else Roesdahl has recently convincingly suggested that it may have served as an assembly hill.⁴⁹ This would make sense in the context of contemporary European views on the duties of a king.⁵⁰ The importance that assemblies played in the conversion of a country suggests a further argument for this interpretation. It would moreover add an extra dimension to the inscription on the runic memorial at Jelling: 'King Harald let make these memorials to Gorm his father and Thyra his mother, the Harald who won for himself Denmark/all and Norway/and made the Danes Christian'. These sentences read like a lapidary royal dictum proclaimed in assembly.

CONCLUSIONS

Keeping in mind the problem of distinguishing textual copying from independent sources, there seems to be a direct line on Scandinavian matters in the Saxon ecclesiastical texts, from Widukind of Corvey, via Thietmar to Adam of Bremen. But such lines of literary transmission in ecclesiastical centres make the Arabic and Byzantine sources especially important as independent eyewitnesses.

The written evidence as a whole emphasizes the importance of food sacrifices made in the open air. By inference, it may be assumed that the sacrifice was followed by a feast in a building. Hall and farmhouse, however, were not the only building types used for heathen cults in northern Europe. The temple at Goodmanham stood in a precinct and was clearly a separate building. The temple of King Erik, which was quickly built at Birka, must also have been a separate wooden building – and in this case there were already two wooden churches at Birka, built by Hergeir and Gautbert respectively, that might have served as models.

Although the documented examples of such separate temple buildings are few in the written sources, and in the archaeological remains they are absent, it would certainly be wrong to disregard them. Moreover, the unusually small hall at Uppåkra appears to have been used mainly for feasting and may represent yet another version of a 'temple'. Finally, the assembly place must be taken into account, perhaps as a sanctuary, but definitely as an arena for decisions on questions of religion. But the main impression remains that natural sites were of central importance in the cult. Tree, grove, mound, spring and the shore of lake and sea can hardly be termed sanctuaries, but they were certainly sacred places.

J. Henning (ed.), *Europa im 10. Jahrhundert. Archäologie einer Aufbruchzeit* (Mainz am Rhein, 2002), p. 99. 49 Ibid., p. 98. 50 Fuglesang, 'Christian reliquaries', pp 199–200.

The first generation in Ireland, 795–812: Viking raids and Viking bases?¹

EMER PURCELL

Viking activity in Ireland, c.795–836, is traditionally characterized by ‘hit-and-run’ raids. They came, they plundered and they left, to return either to the homelands or to other colonies within the Irish Sea province. Evidence from recent archaeological excavations may call for a reassessment of this view: for example, four male Viking burials excavated in South Great George’s Street and Great Ship Street in Dublin city have ‘intercept’ radiocarbon dates that fall in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.² Contemporary habitation evidence found at the South Great George’s Street site dates to the early to mid-ninth century.³ This essay focuses on the annalistic record of the very first raids (795–812) and assesses the possibility that, even during this early period, the Vikings had temporary bases on islands off the Irish coast and/or along the coast itself.

In the words of Peter Sawyer, ‘for several decades the Vikings mounted what were, in effect, hit-and-run raids, rarely venturing far inland’.⁴ F.J. Byrne also adopts this view.⁵ Donnchadh Ó Corráin argues that ‘for the first four decades, from 795 to about 836, raiding follows a clear pattern. The raids themselves were hit-and-run affairs by small, sea-borne but fast-moving forces, probably independent freebooters, who appear suddenly, attack island and coastal monastic settlements, and disappear with equal rapidity’.⁶ Similar opinions are advanced by Poul Holm: ‘In the 820s and 830s the Vikings primarily adhered to hit-and-run tactics in which the taking of slaves was a fairly regular feature,

¹ This essay forms part of a larger study of the first generation of Viking raids in Ireland, namely my doctoral thesis, ‘The Vikings in ninth-century Ireland: sources and settlements’ (PhD, UCC, 2014), chs 4, 5. I have presented aspects of this research at a number of conferences and am grateful for comments and suggestions received from those present at Save Viking Waterford (Waterford, 2004), the Fifteenth Viking Congress (Cork, 2005), the Twenty-third Conference of Irish Medievalists (Limerick, 2009) and New Directions in Scandinavian Studies (Fordham University, New York, 2010). ² Issues regarding the use of ‘intercept’ radiocarbon dates will be addressed below. ³ L. Simpson, ‘Viking warrior-burials: is this the *longphort*?’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 11–62. ⁴ P. Sawyer, ‘The age of the Vikings, and before’ in P. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), p. 9. See also the same author’s *The age of the Vikings* (London, 1962). ⁵ F.J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (2nd ed. Dublin, 2001), p. 263. ⁶ D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin and London, 1972), p. 82. Twenty-five years later he reiterated this view in

though probably not on a large scale⁷ and by Howard Clarke: 'Viking activity took the form of occasional freebooting raids, mainly along the Irish Sea coast and only short distances inland ... As far as we know, they always went back home with their loot: there is no indication of overwintering in Ireland at this stage'.⁸ In the most recent analysis, Mary Valante notes the first recorded Viking raid in 795: 'From then until 837, Viking raids in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe were sporadic, largely coastal and the raiders left quickly with their plunder'.⁹

My reassessment of the hit-and-run phase of activity began as part of a more detailed study of ninth-century Viking-related annalistic entries.¹⁰ It was also motivated by archaeological evidence, particularly the radiocarbon dates of the burials from Linzi Simpson's excavations of South Great George's Street and Great Ship Street. Clare Downham also notes the potential importance of this material and argues that the Vikings may have anchored their ships offshore or had camps on land during the early period of raids on Ireland.¹¹ Interestingly, osteological analysis of three of the five skeletons revealed that they were under 25 years of age, while oxygen isotope analysis suggested that two warriors may have originated in Scandinavia and that two others were probably from somewhere within the British Isles, possibly, as Simpson proposes, the western coast of Scotland.¹² Four of these burials had radiocarbon determinations between the late seventh and the late ninth century and 'intercept' dates of c.780–800.¹³

Contemporary habitation evidence found at the South Great George's Street site dates to the early to mid-ninth century and Simpson states that 'while the habitation deposits are difficult to date, they certainly pre-dated the mid-ninth century, as this area was then used for at least four male Viking warrior burials, which were spread throughout the eastern side of the site'.¹⁴ She continues:

The most startling new information, however, must be the results of the carbon-14 determinations, which show a consistent probability that these warriors are early in date, perhaps even pre-dating the establishment of the *longphort* in AD841. Thus in the absence of documentary evidence that might otherwise have been provided by the annals, the archaeologist would probably look at a date between the late eighth and early ninth century for these individuals.¹⁵

'Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides' in Sawyer, *Oxford illustrated history of the Vikings*, p. 87. 7 P. Holm, 'The slave trade of Dublin, ninth to twelfth centuries', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 319. 8 H.B. Clarke, 'Proto-towns and towns in Ireland and Britain in the ninth and tenth centuries' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 343. 9 M. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), p. 37. 10 Purcell, 'Vikings in ninth-century Ireland'. See also my 'Ninth-century Viking entries in the Irish annals: no "forty years' rest"' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 322–37. 11 C. Downham, 'The historical importance of Viking-Age Waterford', *JCS*, 4 (2005), 74–6. 12 Simpson, 'Viking warrior-burials', p. 11. 13 Ibid. 14 Ibid., p. 37. 15 Ibid., p. 50.

Despite improvements in the science of radiocarbon dating, different programmes and curves are used for calibration, as well as considerable variation in how this material is reported.¹⁶ Robert Chapple has set out the standard practice for citing radiocarbon data and I have endeavoured where possible to include all available published data on the burials discussed below.¹⁷ The calibrated radiocarbon dates from the three burials from South Great George's Street and the burial from Great Ship Street range from the late seventh to late ninth century: Burial F196, for instance, has a calibrated radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 670–880, which means it has 95% probability of falling within that period. Simpson calculates an intercept date of c.770 for this burial.¹⁸ Burial F223 has a calibrated radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 670–880 (95% probability) with an intercept date of 770.¹⁹ Burial F342 is a little more problematic: it has a calibrated radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 670–880 and an intercept date of 782, but with a 1 sigma calculation (68% probability) of falling between 771 and 851, and an intercept date of 851.²⁰ The fourth burial (F598) from South Great George's Street has a later radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 786–955.²¹ The Great Ship Street burial (F12) has a date range similar to those from South Great George's Street with a calibrated radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 665–865 and Simpson proposes an intercept date of 790.²² The probability method of radiocarbon dating is now favoured over the use of intercept dates.²³ Nevertheless, it is striking that the radiocarbon dates of at least three (four if one includes F342) of these burials suggest that they were interred some time in the late eighth to early ninth century.

Evidence from other sites excavated in Dublin may strengthen the argument in favour of an early date for the material from South Great George's Street and Great Ship Street, and hint at a temporary base in Dublin before the establishment of the *longphort* in 841. Most interesting are the two Viking burials excavated in Golden Lane by Edmond O'Donovan.²⁴ A furnished male burial

16 R.E. Taylor, *Radiocarbon dating: an archaeological perspective* (Orlando, FL, 1987). 17 R. Chapple, 'The absolute dating of archaeological excavations in Ulster carried out by Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, 1998–2007', *UJA*, 3rd ser., 67 (2008), 153–81; R. Chapple, 'Just an expensive number? A plea for clarity in the reporting of radiocarbon dates', *Archaeology Ireland*, 24:2 (2010), 29–31. I am grateful to Robert Chapple and Mick Monk for many email exchanges and discussions with regard to matters surrounding radiocarbon dating. 18 Simpson, 'Viking warrior-burials', p. 40: (1 sigma) 68% probability AD690–790 (Lab: Beta Analytic radiocarbon dating laboratory, Miami, Florida). 19 Ibid., p. 44: (1 sigma) 68% probability AD690–790 (Lab: Beta Analytic radiocarbon dating laboratory, Miami, Florida). 20 Ibid., p. 44 (Lab: Radiocarbon dating laboratory, Queen's University Belfast). 21 Ibid., p. 47: (1 sigma) 68% probability AD859–893, intercept date AD885 (Lab: Radiocarbon dating laboratory, Queen's University Belfast). 22 Ibid., p. 34; (1 sigma) 68% probability AD690–775 (Lab: Centrum voor Isotopen Onderzoek, Groningen). 23 <http://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/embed.php?File=calibration.html> (accessed 3 Sept. 2012). 24 E. O'Donovan, 'There is an antiquarian in all of us', *Archaeology Ireland*, 19:3 (2005), 16–17; E. O'Donovan, 'The Irish, the Vikings and the English: new archaeological evidence from excavations at Golden Lane,

(LXXXV) has a calibrated radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 678–832, which suggests that he was buried some time prior to 832.²⁵ Another furnished Viking burial (CXXIX) from the site, that of a middle-aged or elderly woman, has a radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 680–870.²⁶ O'Donovan states that the two burials 'date, at the very latest, to the mid-/late ninth century; however, statistically the burial LXXXV is 90% more likely to have been interred before AD832'.²⁷ The female burial demonstrates the presence of women in the earliest phase of Viking settlement at Dublin. Simpson also notes the presence of neo-natal remains and juvenile bones at the lowest levels at South Great George's Street.²⁸ Recent work on the earliest phase of Viking activity in Anglo-Saxon England has drawn attention to the importance of women settlers.²⁹

O'Donovan holds that the Golden Lane burials form part of a collection from Dublin that may originally have belonged to a Viking grave-field that stretched from Bride Street to George's Street, with burials dating from the first quarter of the ninth century.³⁰ In a previous study, Ragnall Ó Floinn had drawn attention to the spread of Viking burials on both sides of the River Liffey,³¹ but it is the early dates coming from the scientific analysis of the burials from this concentration around the confluence of the Liffey with the Poddle that is most relevant to this study. As Simpson has emphasized, the consistent dates from South Great George's Street, Great Ship Street and Golden Lane are particularly striking.³²

The challenge for Viking studies in Ireland, and in general, is not just to examine the traditional relationship between the historical and the archaeological evidence, but also to engage with the sophisticated level of scientific and technological evidence now at our disposal – radiocarbon dating and genetic and oxygen isotope analysis. I do not propose to address that challenge directly, since it is a subject for a much larger interdisciplinary study. Here, I draw attention to entries in the Irish annals that might provide an historical context for the early date of these burials. Viking raids are not so straightforward as the terse entries

Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VIII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2006* (Dublin, 2008), pp 36–130. 25 O'Donovan, 'The Irish, the Vikings and the English', pp 52–3, 129: BP1249±32: (1 sigma) 68% probability AD688–754 (Lab: Radiocarbon dating laboratory, Queen's University Belfast). 26 Ibid., pp 50–1, 130: BP1247±33: (1 sigma) 68% probability AD688–780 (Lab: Radiocarbon dating laboratory, Queen's University Belfast). 27 Ibid., p. 70. 28 L. Simpson, 'Pre-Viking and Viking-Age Dublin: some research questions' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin X: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2008* (Dublin, 2010), p. 65. 29 S. McLeod, 'Warriors and women: the sex ratio of Norse migrants to eastern England up to 900AD', *Early Medieval Europe*, 19 (2011), 332–53. Also worthy of mention is the ninth-century high-status female burial found in Finglas, Co. Dublin (M. Sikora, 'The Finglas burial: archaeology and ethnicity in Viking-Age Dublin' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 402–17). 30 O'Donovan, 'The Irish, the Vikings and the English', p. 70. 31 R. Ó Floinn, 'The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 131–65. 32 Simpson, 'Pre-Viking and early Viking-Age Dublin', p. 73.

in contemporary annals would lead us to believe. In an attempt to understand the more complex issues that lie behind a raid, the minimalist entries in the Irish annals are teased out here.

Whatever the differences between Viking settlement patterns that emerged in Ireland compared to those of Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Scandinavian England and continental Europe, the first generation of Viking raids and the establishment of temporary bases were probably very similar. This is often overlooked in discussions of ninth-century Viking activity in Ireland and of the first generation of raids in western Europe. The central question is: what constitutes a temporary base? Duration may differ. It may last anything from a few days to a few weeks, or a few months, or something more lasting such as a summer or a seasonal encampment. Eventually, the Vikings remained at their bases over winter and in consecutive years. The annals provide evidence for all of these in the period 795–836. Indeed, the line between a raiding-base and a settlement is often blurred. How, or indeed, can we draw such distinctions?

In 794 the Annals of Ulster record the devastation of all the islands of Britain by *gennti*, ‘heathens’.³³ This announcement focuses on islands and, indeed, for the first few raids the islands suffer most. The incursion of *gennti* in Ireland and Britain is noticed in 798, but it is not until 807 with a raid on Ros Camm – a coastal church (in the townland of Roscam, parish of Oranmore, Co. Galway) – that a raid on the mainland is recorded.³⁴ In 795 the annals relate ‘Ioscadh Rechrainne o geinntib 7 Scí do choscraadh 7 do lomradh’.³⁵ Downham has shown that the Isle of Skye was not attacked, and that this entry actually records the breaking of the shrine of Rechru (*scrín* not *sc(r)i*).³⁶

The identification of Rechru is much debated and credible arguments are advanced both for Rathlin Island, off the coast of Antrim, and for Lambay, off the coast of Dublin. Rathlin would fit well with a sequence of raids on Iona, Inishmurray (Co. Sligo) and Inishbofin (Co. Galway) recorded in 795. James Graham-Campbell and Colleen Batey point out that a number of poorly recorded pagan Norse graves from Rathlin Island ‘suggest the existence of a cemetery – and thus actual settlement – rather than just a chance location for burial’ on the island in the ninth century.³⁷ They also draw attention to the strategic location of Rathlin and its proximity to the Scottish Isles.³⁸ Nevertheless, Lambay (Rechru Breg) also makes geographical sense. Máire Herbert highlights that it was part of the *familia* of Columba (though so was Rathlin) and thus that it fits with the raid on Iona (795), the mother-house of the

³³ All references to events recorded in the Annals of Ulster are to the corrected date. ³⁴ D. Ó Corráin, ‘Vikings II: Ros Camm’, *Peritia*, 10 (1996), 236. ³⁵ *AU*, s.a. 795: ‘The burning of Rechru by the heathens, and Scí was overwhelmed and laid waste’. ³⁶ C. Downham, ‘An imaginary Viking raid on Skye in 795?’, *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 20 (2000), 192–6. The entry would then read: ‘The burning of Rechru by *gennti* and its shrine was broken open and despoiled’. ³⁷ J. Graham-Campbell and C.E. Batey, *Vikings in Scotland: an archaeological survey* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 94. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Columban federation.³⁹ The entry in the Annals of Inisfallen for 795 ('Orcain Iae Coluim Chille ⁊ Inse Muirethaig ⁊ Inse Bó Finne') is probably a conflation.⁴⁰ What is clear, though often overlooked, is that initial Viking attacks were on both the east and the west coasts of Ireland. In fact, if Rechru is identified with Rathlin (rather than with Lambay), then they reached farther south on the west coast first. There is some debate about Viking settlement on the west coast, yet it is clear that in the initial period of attack it suffered in a similar fashion.

According to the Annals of Ulster for 798, Vikings attacked the island of Inis Pátraic off the coast of Dublin:

Combustio Inse Patraicc o genntibh, ⁊ borime na crich do breith ⁊ scrin Do Chonna do briseadh doaibh ⁊ innreda mara doaib cene eiter Erinn ⁊ Albain.

The burning of Inis Pátraic by the heathens, and they took the cattle-tribute of the territories, and broke the shrine of Do-Chonna, and also made great incursions both in Ireland and in Alba.

The account in the Annals of Clonmacnoise reads:

The island of St Patrick was burnt by the Danes, they taxed the Landes with great taxtions, they took the reliques of St Dochonna and made many invassions to this kindome and tooke many rich and great bootyes, as well from Ireland as from Scotland.⁴¹

The theft or destruction of a religious shrine during a Viking raid was not an unusual event, but of more interest is the taking of cattle as tribute, for it has greater significance in terms of both practical implications and symbolic meaning.⁴² In practical terms, taking cattle provided badly needed sustenance, particularly if these Vikings had come directly from the Scandinavian homelands or even from Viking colonies within the Irish Sea province.⁴³ Regardless of whether the cattle were taken for immediate consumption or to provide food for a base or a settlement elsewhere, there must have been somewhere to corral temporarily the cattle.⁴⁴ The size of a cattle-tribute in the late eighth century is difficult to determine, but we can assume that it comprised a number of cows.⁴⁵

³⁹ M. Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry; the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Dublin, 1996), p. 42. ⁴⁰ *AI*, s.a. 795: 'The plundering of Í Coluim Chille, and of Inis Muiredaig, and of Inis Bó Finne'. ⁴¹ *AClon*. ⁴² M. Ryan et al., 'Church Island: a description' in A. MacShamhráin (ed.), *The Island of St Patrick: church and ruling dynasties in Fingal and Meath, 400–1148* (Dublin, 2004), p. 107, where it is suggested that it was the stone tomb-shrine of the saint that was broken. ⁴³ Though more recent research stresses that there is no archaeological evidence extant to support the theory that the Scottish Isles were settled before 800: see, for example, J.H. Barrett, 'What caused the Viking Age?', *Antiquity*, 82 (2008), 674. ⁴⁴ Slaughtered cattle must be allowed to hang for at least two days before butchering and consumption. I am grateful to Dr Michael O'Grady, Food Science, UCC, for discussions on this matter. ⁴⁵ Downham draws similar conclusions ('Historical importance

However that may be, the year 798 is very early for tribute to be exacted in a hit-and-run raid in an Irish context. In the Viking Age, tribute was taken either first to gain submission, or secondly as protection money to prevent further attack, or thirdly as an annual levy. There is plenty of contemporary evidence for the exaction of tribute in such a fashion by Viking raiders in Anglo-Saxon England and continental Europe. Niels Lund, in his discussion of tribute-taking on the Continent, has argued that burning and other atrocities may have served ‘to remind the opposite party of the alternative to successful negotiations’.⁴⁶ Burning may have been not a meaningless destructive act, but a deliberate tactic used by Vikings to enforce submission from local populations. In the case of Inis Pátraic, the island may have been subdued and then used as a base from which to conduct raids on the mainland in Ireland and in Britain, if we are to take the annalist at his word.

It is clear that this was not merely a cattle raid and that some degree of organized payment is implicit. Significantly, the Annals of Ulster state that the Vikings took *borime na crích*, ‘the cattle-tribute of the territories’; if this was merely tribute from the island, then it may not have amounted to much. An alternative worth considering is that the tribute was regularly collected on Inis Pátraic by the church or by Irish leaders and that the Vikings just continued the practice. Ó Corráin argues that it refers to ‘a forced levy for provisions on the mainland nearby’.⁴⁷ There are parallels for such use of island settlements in Ireland, though admittedly at a much later date, at sites such as Scatterry Island in the Shannon Estuary, which Ó Corráin argues may have been where the Vikings of Limerick collected their tribute.⁴⁸

There is no doubt that, by the tenth century, it was a more established practice. A later example of the use of island settlements by Vikings may be found in the name of the Copeland Islands, off the coast of Co. Down. There is some debate about the Scandinavian origins of this place-name, but most recently Dónall Mac Gilla Easpaig has argued that Kaupmann-eyjar (whence Copeland) is a compound of Scandinavian *kaupmann*, ‘merchant’ and the plural of *øy*, ‘island’, and that it signifies ‘merchant’s islands’.⁴⁹ The toponymy of Inis Pátraic itself is also very interesting. The parish later became known as Holmpatrick, a translation of the Irish name into Norse *holm*, ‘islet’ and Patrick. Clarke argues that many of names on the east coast that derive from Old Norse have little to do with settlement and originate as navigational markers: for

of Viking-Age Waterford’, 75). For a more detailed discussion of cattle tribute in early medieval Ireland, see Purcell, ‘Vikings in ninth-century Ireland’. 46 N. Lund, ‘Allies of God or man? The Viking expansion in a European perspective’, *Viator*, 20 (1989), 56. 47 D. Ó Corráin, ‘The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the ninth century’, *Peritia*, 12 (1998), 323–4. 48 J. Sheehan et al., ‘A Viking-Age maritime haven: a reassessment of the island settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry’, *JLA*, 10 (2001), 113. 49 D. Mac Giolla Easpaig, ‘L’influence scandinave sur la toponymie irlandaise’ in E. Ridel (ed.), *L’heritage maritime des Vikings en Europe de l’ouest: Colloque international de La Hague, Flottemanville–Hague, 30 septembre–3 octobre 1999* (Caen,

example, Howth, Lambay and Dalkey Island.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Mac Giolla Easpaig maintains that this kind of translation and mutual understanding of language could occur only where there was close contact and significant interaction between Irish and Norse.⁵¹ Although these hybrid place-names may have emerged only at a later date, of more interest is the fact observed by Mac Giolla Easpaig that island names make up almost half the total of place-names of Scandinavian origin in Ireland.⁵²

In 807 the Annals of Ulster record that ‘Gentiles combuserunt Insulam Muiredaigh ⁊ inuadunt Ross Camm’ (the heathens burnt Inis Muiredaig and invaded Ros Camm).⁵³ Again, an island off the coast is overrun before raids are launched on the mainland, specifically the monastic settlement at Ros Camm. In such fashion, it may be comparable to their taking of Inis Pátraic in 798. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is a considerable difference between the proximity of Inis Pátraic to the mainland (approximately 1.6km) and the distance from Inishmurray to Ros Camm in the inner reaches of Galway Bay. Nevertheless, islands such as Inishmurray may have been used as temporary bases from which to launch attacks on monastic settlements along the coast of the mainland, and as places to rest on the way back from raiding. Temporary island bases could provide necessary time for respite and recovery, and to prepare and regroup for the journey back to the homelands or to other Viking colonies. This would have allowed them sufficient time to organize their spoils and to ensure that they had adequate supplies to last the journey home. Writing in the late ninth century, Adrevaldus describes a Viking camp on the island of Saint-Florent-le-Vieil in the River Loire:

They had an island ... organized as a port for their ships – as a refuge for all dangers – and they built a fortification like a hut camp, in which they held crowds of prisoners in chains and in which they rested themselves after their toil so that they might be ready for warfare. From that place they undertook unexpected raids, sometimes in ships, sometimes on horseback, and they destroyed all the province.⁵⁴

While ships could, and often did, double as bases, Vikings may also have had temporary bases on land where they regrouped before they hit the high seas. I am in no way attempting to diminish what was in essence the characteristic image of Vikings as raiders, nor am I trying to deny the advances in ship technology that facilitated this accumulation of wealth and characterized the

2002), pp 456–7. ⁵⁰ Clarke, ‘Proto-towns and towns’, p. 341. ⁵¹ Mac Giolla Easpaig, ‘L’influence scandinave sur la toponymie irlandaise’, p. 456. ⁵² Ibid., p. 466. ⁵³ For a discussion of Inishmurray and its relationship with ecclesiastical settlements on the mainland, see J. O’Sullivan and T. Ó Carragáin, *Inishmurray: monks and pilgrims in an Atlantic landscape* (Cork, 2008), pp 30–41. ⁵⁴ O. Holder-Egger (ed.), ‘Ex Adrevaldi Floriacensis miraculis S. Benedicti’ in *MGH SSRG*, xv, pt 1, p. 494, discussed in Holm, ‘Slave trade of Dublin’, 325.

Viking Age itself. Their success as raiders and plunderers was based on speed and on the element of surprise.

Five years after the raid on Inishmurray and Ros Camm, Vikings returned to the west coast. Of particular interest are a sequence of recorded encounters between Vikings and the men of Umail and the Conmaicne during the years 812–13. Events commence in 812, as the Annals of Ulster record:

Ar gennte firu h-Umhaill. Ar Conmaicne la gennti.

A slaughter of the heathens by the men of Umail. A slaughter of the Conmaicne by the heathens.

[813] *Ar n-Umill la gennti ubi ceciderunt Coscrach m. Flainddabrat 7 Dunadhach rex h-Umill.*

The slaughter at Umail by the heathens in which fell Coscrach son of Flannabra and Dúnadach, king of Umail.

Details of the 812 encounter between Vikings and the men of Umail (a name preserved today in the barony of Burrishoole – Buiríos Umhaill – but originally a much larger territory) are slim, but one may assume that it happened during an attempted raid, or in retaliation for a raid. In either case, Fir Umail were quick to react; this is only the second Irish dynasty recorded to have defeated Vikings.⁵⁵ Alternatively, is it possible that the men of Umail were on the offensive? In the same year, we are told that the Conmaicne (a people settled in various parts of Connacht, though mainly in the modern barony of Ballynahinch, Co. Galway, but originally a much larger territory) were slaughtered by Vikings; again there are no details as to where this encounter took place. In the following year, 813, Vikings exact revenge when they kill Coscrach, the son of Flannabra, and Dúnadach, the king of Umail. This is the first non-obit entry recorded for this year in the Annals of Ulster, which may hint that the event took place early in 813. Where exactly the encounter occurred is impossible to determine; the annals simply tell us that it was in Umail. Pádraig Ó Riain has argued that 80–90 per cent of the battle-sites involving disputes among the Irish can readily be identified as either territorial limits or recognizable boundary areas. Encounters regularly occurred on the immediate boundary of the tribe [*sic*] undergoing aggression.⁵⁶ Battle-site is an under-explored topic in early medieval Irish history, particularly, when it comes to battles with Vikings.⁵⁷

These early ninth-century raids on the west coast are traditionally interpreted as evidence of summer or seasonal raiding ventures, with the assumption that

⁵⁵ In the previous year, 811, the men of Ulaid are the first recorded dynasty to inflict defeat on the Vikings. ⁵⁶ P. Ó Riain, 'Boundary associations in early Irish society', *Studia Celtica*, 7 (1972), 24; P. Ó Riain, 'Battle site and territorial extent in early Ireland', *ZCP*, 33 (1974), 68. ⁵⁷ C. Etchingham, 'The Battle of Cenn Fúait', *Peritia*, 21 (2010), 208–32 is a welcome addition

the Vikings came to these areas on the west coast two years in a row. It is possible, as has always been assumed, that they familiarized themselves with the territory and, therefore, were able to sail back to the same place in the following year. If this were the case, there is a strong element of continuity here, with the implication that it was the same band of Vikings. Alternatively, perhaps word had spread at home, or along the sailing routes, that the west coast of Ireland was a good place to raid. There must have been some degree of exchange of information among raiders, possibly along similar lines to those recounted in the *Life of St Findan of Rheinau*. The *Life* dates to the ninth century, shortly after Findan's death.⁵⁸ Though a hagiographical text, some of the detail found in the *Life* is informative. For example, when Findan is captured for a second time, he is held captive on a Viking ship that is boarded by another Viking raider. The latter enquires of his compatriots as to 'insulae qualitem, et qualiter ibi erga illos accidisset' (the nature of the island [Ireland] and how they had fared there).⁵⁹ Such exchanges must have been commonplace.

Nevertheless, the annalistic entries from 812 and 813 may actually reflect something more than a seasonal base; they may indicate that a small band of Vikings remained on the west coast over the winter. Ó Corráin argues that these attacks were motivated by the desire for land and the area 'may not have appeared altogether inhospitable to seaborne raiders already familiar with similar coastlines'.⁶⁰ Until recently, the archaeological focus for Viking activity on the west coast of Ireland has rested mainly on a ninth-century male burial at Eyrephort, Co. Galway. The burial, discovered in 1947, was first analysed and discussed by Joseph Raftery and dated to c.850.⁶¹ In 1988 this burial was reassessed by John Bradley and John Sheehan respectively; both argued independently that it may represent Viking settlement in the area.⁶² Sheehan, in particular, argued that the burial may be indicative of an attempt to establish a base on the west coast. He remarked that

the coast environment of western Ireland, with its indented littoral and offshore islands, is one which would have appeared neither alien nor unfamiliar to the Vikings and one where their native techniques of fishing and bird-catching could easily have been put to use.⁶³

to this subject. 58 M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Friend and foe: Vikings in ninth- and tenth-century Irish literature' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 392–3. 59 O. Holder-Egger (ed.), 'Vita Findani' in *MGH SSRG*, xv, pt 1, pp 502–6. See also text and trans. in R.T. Christiansen, 'The people of the north', *Lochlann*, 2 (1962), 137–64. 60 Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans*, p. 83. 61 J. Raftery, 'A Viking burial in County Galway', *JGAHS*, 29 (1961), 5. 62 J. Sheehan, 'A re-assessment of the Viking burial at Eyrephort, Co. Galway', *JGAHS*, 41 (1987–8), 60–72; J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland' in J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin OSA* (Kilkenny, 1988), p. 60. 63 Sheehan, 'Re-assessment of the Viking burial', 70.

In 1988 Bradley also drew attention to the site of Truska, located 6.4km across Mannin Bay from Eyrephort; at that time he remarked on the middens in particular and on the possibility they were evidence of Scandinavian settlement.⁶⁴ In 2003 Erin Keeley-Gibbons and Eamonn Kelly examined two male burials and a sunken-floored building at the site and proposed that they represent evidence of a Viking-Age farmstead.⁶⁵ The burials are orientated west-east, with heads to the west, but there are no grave-goods. A fragment of a decorated, double-sided antler comb was found inside the house; Keeley-Gibbons and Kelly point out that the closest parallel is from Fishamble Street in Dublin and dates to the tenth century.⁶⁶ The sunken-floored building has parallels with those from ninth-century levels at Essex Street West and tenth-century levels at Christchurch Place and Winetavern Street.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Simpson has recently argued that the sunken-floored buildings on Winetavern Street and Christchurch Place should now be redated to the ninth century.⁶⁸ Re-examination of the sunken-floored building from Beginish, Co. Kerry, by Sheehan and others suggests that it also belongs to this type of house.⁶⁹ Habitation evidence at Truska dates to before the burials, and Keeley-Gibbons and Kelly state that the burials are to be associated with the abandonment of the site.⁷⁰

In a more recent review of the site, Kelly includes an analysis of the skeletal remains, which gives calibrated radiocarbon dates to 2 sigma of 680–890 and 660–870. He points out that these accord well with a radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 700–900 from the midden material.⁷¹ A cattle bone from the house yielded a calibrated radiocarbon date to 2 sigma of 773–897.⁷² Evidence from other

⁶⁴ Bradley, 'Interpretation of Scandinavian settlement', p. 60. ⁶⁵ E. Keeley-Gibbons and E.P. Kelly, 'A Viking-Age farmstead in Connemara', *Archaeology Ireland*, 17:1 (2003), 28–32. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 30. ⁶⁷ L. Simpson, *Director's findings: Temple Bar West* (Dublin, 1999). ⁶⁸ Simpson, 'Pre-Viking and early Viking-Age Dublin', pp 84–5. ⁶⁹ Sheehan et al., 'Viking-Age maritime haven', 96. ⁷⁰ Keeley-Gibbons and Kelly, 'Viking-Age farmstead', 30. Michael Gibbons has rejected the interpretation of the sunken-floored buildings at Truska and Beginish as evidence of Scandinavian settlement and argues that they are of Irish origin (M. Gibbons and M. Gibbons, 'A critique of the evidence recently presented for the existence of Viking maritime havens and associated rural settlement in Ireland', *JKHAS*, 2:8 (2008), 28–79). ⁷¹ These calibrated radiocarbon dates (2 sigma) are cited in E.P. Kelly, 'The Vikings in Connemara' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin, *Viking Age*, p. 179. The more detailed information that follows is found in E.P. Kelly, 'Vikings on Ireland's Atlantic shore' in E. Purcell et al. (eds), *Clerics, kings and Vikings: essays on medieval Ireland*, forthcoming: Burial 1 BP1225±40 while Burial 2 BP1265±40 (Lab not referenced). Robert Chapple recalibrated the radiocarbon dates from Truska using Computer Program: Calib Rev 6.1.0 and Curve: IntCal09. It produced the following results: Burial 1: radiocarbon age 1225±40, 1 sigma ranges: (start:end) relative area (cal. AD769: cal. AD870) 0.819297; 2 sigma ranges: (start:end) relative area (cal. AD685: cal. AD889) 1; Burial 2: radiocarbon age 1265±40, 1 sigma ranges: (start:end) relative area (cal. AD682: cal. AD776) 1; 2 sigma ranges: (start:end) relative area (cal. AD665: cal. AD830) 0.931375. The broad calibrated date range for the radiocarbon dates from Truska is because of both a flattening out and then an extreme fluctuation of the calibration curve from the late seventh into the ninth century. This is characteristic of all the calibration curves. ⁷² Kelly,

middens dotted along the west coast has been analysed by Kelly, but it has proved difficult to date; even so, he is certain that the majority of these middens belong to the Viking Age.⁷³ In 2005 I argued that the radiocarbon dates emerging from the Great Ship Street/South Great George's Street excavations strengthened the likelihood that the annalistic entries of Viking activity in Conmaicne and Umall in 812–13 attested to the presence of a Viking base, or bases, on the west coast in the early ninth century.⁷⁴

Bradley commented that 'the Viking archaeological kit is distinctive, as the burials at Kilmainham/Islandbridge, Eyrephort, Larne and Arklow testify. This is a phase characterized by isolated coastal settlements'.⁷⁵ Ó Floinn, in a re-examination of the grave-goods from the Kilmainham/Islandbridge cemeteries (which include swords, shield bosses, weights and scales) as well as material from other burials and stray finds from the Dublin area, has argued that the assemblage may date to 850–950, though perhaps with an emphasis on the late ninth century.⁷⁶ Drawing on the evidence emerging from the scientific analysis of recent burials, however, there is every possibility that some of this material may date to the early ninth century. For example, if we did not have radiocarbon dating for the burials from Great Ship Street, South Great George's Street and Golden Lane, the analysis of artefactual material would suggest that they date to the mid-ninth to early tenth century. In the case of Dublin, the documentary evidence has influenced the dating of the burials because traditionally we date the foundation of Viking settlement to 841, when the Annals of Ulster tell us that the heathens established a *longphort* on the Liffey.

Over the last ten years, there have been remarkable advances in sciences associated with burial evidence, radiocarbon dating and genetic and oxygen isotope analysis. As Stephen Harrison has pointed out, discussion of Viking burials in Ireland has tended to focus on grave-goods and latterly on the location of the cemeteries/graves and their relationship to settlement.⁷⁷ We have yet to engage fully with the social and cultural aspects of Viking burial in Ireland. Work is forthcoming from the Viking Graves Project and from the two archaeologists associated with the project, Ó Floinn and Harrison, which will no doubt redress this imbalance.⁷⁸

'Vikings on Ireland's Atlantic shore'. ⁷³ Kelly, 'Vikings in Connemara', p. 174. Middens at Eyrephort, on Omev Island, around False Bay, Doonloughan Bay, Mannin Bay and Ballyconnelly Bay, in the vicinity of Slyne Head and in the Roundstone area. ⁷⁴ E. Purcell, 'Vikings and Viking settlement in Ireland: the ninth-century annalistic evidence', poster presentation, Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 2005. ⁷⁵ Bradley, 'Interpretation of Scandinavian settlement', p. 68. ⁷⁶ Ó Floinn, 'Archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland', pp 131–48. ⁷⁷ S. Harrison, 'Separated from the foaming maelstrom: landscapes of Insular "Viking" burial', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 14 (2008), 173–82. I am grateful to Stephen for sending me a pdf of this article. See also the same author's 'Bride Street revisited: a re-evaluation of a tenth-century burial at Dublin' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin X*, pp 126–52; 'Viking graves and grave-goods in Ireland' in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 61–75. ⁷⁸ S.H. Harrison and R. Ó Floinn, *Viking*

In terms of this study, it is important to question the ceremonial status of these burials. They were part of a ritual practice that, in most cases, must have involved a deliberate choice of location, as well as a considered deposition of grave-goods. Burials can also be read as a form of power politics; especially in the larger cemeteries, there was an implicit message that relayed an element of intent – ‘we are here to stay’ – and this must have been clear to the contemporary local Irish population. In some cases, such as those at Kilmainham and Islandbridge, Viking burials were inserted in or located beside Christian cemeteries.⁷⁹ Were they simply taking advantage of the designated space? Or was it a more deliberate choice? What would it have meant to the local population to see these burials in or beside their own traditional Christian burial grounds?

Some of the burials had a lasting impact on the landscape: for example, medieval Hoggen Green derived its name from Old Norse *haugar*, indicating burial-mounds. Even in the case of the isolated burials or smaller grave-fields, these sites may also be viewed as a statement of Viking right to settle and control the territory where their ancestors were interred. Harrison has gone as far as to argue that these choices were often attempts to associate with places of ritual and significance for the local population.⁸⁰ Simpson draws attention to the evidence from South Great George’s Street where the burials were in shallow graves and suggests that there was some sort of covering material in the form of a stone cairn or mound.⁸¹ There was also indirect evidence of cremation from both South Great George’s Street and Golden Lane; though none of the skeletons themselves was burnt, there were charcoal and fire-reddened clay associated with some of the burials.⁸² These burials were the result of ceremonial and ritual processes that must have taken some planning and time to execute, which suggests that they were not the hurried actions of a defeated Viking army in flight. The associated habitation evidence supports the interpretation that these burials were the work of a settled population who took time to bury their elite.

Examination of the ninth-century annalistic evidence reveals a clear progression in Viking activity: a pattern begins to emerge from the initial raids on the islands, to raids on the coast, and eventually to raids farther inland. This change occurs in 812 with more encounters with secular dynasties, both on the west coast as we have seen and in Munster, where the Annals of Ulster record: ‘Ar gennte la Mumain, id est la Cobthach m. Maele Duin, ri Locha Lein’ (A slaughter of the heathens in Mumu, viz. by Cobthach son of Mael Dúin, king of

graves and grave-goods in Ireland (Dublin, forthcoming). ⁷⁹ E. O’Brien, ‘A reconsideration of the location and context of Viking burials at Kilmainham/Islandbridge, Dublin’ in C. Manning (ed.), *Beyond the Pale: studies in honour of Patrick Healy* (Bray, 1998), pp 35–44; E. O’Brien, ‘The location and context of Viking burials at Kilmainham and Islandbridge, Dublin’ in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 203–21. ⁸⁰ Harrison, ‘Separated from the foaming maelstrom’, p. 178. ⁸¹ Simpson, ‘Pre-Viking and early Viking-Age Dublin’, p. 67. ⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Loch Léin). Traditionally, this dynasty's territory is centred on Killarney and the upper Laune.⁸³ In the period 812–36 further evidence can be found in the annals to support the hypothesis that Vikings had bases in Ireland before the traditional foundation of *longphuirt* at Lough Neagh, Annagassan and Dublin in the early 840s.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, even during the very first generation of raids, 795–812, Vikings must have had temporary bases on islands off the coast of Ireland and along the coast itself. One must be careful not to over-interpret the annalistic evidence: the reference to the attack on Inis Pátraic may not imply that they had a base on the island, but the taking of cattle as tribute signifies that it was something more than a simple hit-and-run raid. Records of Viking activity on the west coast in the years 812–13 indicate that at the very least they had seasonal bases there two summers in a row. The radiocarbon dates from South Great Georges Street, Great Ship Street and Golden Lane hint at the presence of a Viking base, or bases, at Dublin in the early decades of the ninth century.⁸⁵

Perhaps we have been over-influenced by the documentary record that suggests that Vikings did not have a base in the area until 841. Leaving aside the complex issue of radiocarbon dating, close examination of the annalistic evidence alone suggests that there was a much more complex process at work. Certainly in the initial period of Viking attack it seems that independent bands of Vikings were conducting raids. In these exploratory raids, they took artefacts, people and food supplies. As we progress into the first half of the ninth century, it is clear that they launched raiding expeditions, but even the simplest raid requires some planning, even if that is only an exit plan. These raids must have needed some degree of organization in terms of where the target sites were in relation to one another; how to get there; how long it would take; what supplies were necessary to conduct the attack and to ensure sufficient resources to complete the return journey, or indeed to make it to the next target. Vikings certainly used hit-and-run raids to their advantage, but repeated use of the term somehow implies mere opportunism (no doubt Vikings were opportunists supreme). Some degree of forward planning was also necessary and there is no doubt that strategy was a vital component in the success of these adventurers who left their homelands in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

83 This raid and Viking activity around Dingle Bay are discussed in more detail in Purcell, 'Vikings in ninth-century Ireland', ch. 5. 84 Ibid. The presence of Viking bases on the east coast as early as the 820s is noted by C. Etchingham, 'Evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Wicklow' in K. Hannigan and W. Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: history and society* (Dublin, 1994), pp 113–38 and by E.P. Kelly and John Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois' in P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), pp 123–59. 85 Recalibration of all dates from Viking burials using the same programme and calibration curve would improve the accuracy and reliability of the results, and should form the foundation of a much larger interdisciplinary study.

The *longphort* in Viking-Age Ireland: the archaeological evidence

EAMONN P. KELLY

Viking activity in Ireland started in the last decade of the eighth century, when fleets from the Hebrides, the Orkneys and possibly Norway began roving around the Irish coast, investigating the resource potential of the area and targeting coastal monasteries and population centres. Early Viking raiding was sporadic and possibly seasonal, taking place during the summer. The numbers of Viking warriors involved and the fleet sizes were probably small.¹

Viking settlements may have been established on the north and west coasts of Ireland as early as the second decade of the ninth century.² A new phase of activity dates to around 840 when fortifications began to be constructed to protect fleets and to facilitate raiding and trading. The term *longphort* is applied to these sites.³ The earliest *longphort* site mentioned in the annals was founded on Lough Neagh in 840 and further fortified bases were established at Dublin and Linn Duachail (Annagassan, Co. Louth) a year later. Annalistic references to *longphort* sites during the ninth and early tenth centuries invariably refer to Viking fortresses associated with a fleet or fleets. Occasionally the term *dún*, 'stronghold' is substituted. After the early tenth century, *longphort* is applied more generally and may describe any fortification, be it of Viking or of Irish origin, whether or not it is associated with the activities of a fleet.⁴

The previous existence of many Viking *longphort* sites in Ireland is evident from historical and annalistic sources.⁵ Historical evidence will be referred to here only in cases where it can be related to particular monuments that have been identified in the field. This essay aims to present archaeological evidence for possible Viking *longphort* sites in Ireland based on an assessment of their morphological and locational factors and of excavated finds or associated stray finds and place-names.

1 E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois' in P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), p. 124. 2 E. Gibbons and E.P. Kelly, 'A Viking-Age farmstead in Connemara', *Archaeology Ireland*, 17:1 (2003), 28–32; E.P. Kelly, 'The Vikings in Connemara' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), p. 176. 3 J. Maas, 'Longphort, dún and dúnad in the Irish annals of the Viking period', *Peritia*, 20 (2008), 257–75; J. Sheehan, 'The *longphort* in Viking-Age Ireland', *Acta Archaeologica*, 79 (2008), 283. 4 Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp 137–8. 5 Ibid., pp 124–5; Maas, 'Longphort, dún and dúnad'; Sheehan, 'The *longphort* in

My interest in the subject of Viking fortifications in Ireland began almost two decades ago with a collaborative investigation of earthworks known as Dunrally Fort, located on the bank of the River Barrow at Vicarstown, Co. Laois.⁶ I had earlier investigated possible *longphort* sites at Kellysgrove, Co. Galway,⁷ Fairyhill near Athlunkard, Co. Clare,⁸ and Athlumney (Dún Dubchomair?), Co. Meath,⁹ though the possible significance of these sites was not fully appreciated at the time.

Research into parallels for the Dunrally site drew attention to work undertaken at an earthwork in Ballaghkeeran Little, Lough Ree, Co. Westmeath.¹⁰ Here, a trial excavation was undertaken in 1982 by the late Tom Fanning on a site he believed might be a Viking *longphort*. It was also noted that an earthwork known as Lis na Rann at Annagassan, Co. Louth, might be the citadel of the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill. At that time, no outer enclosure could be determined, although it was considered likely that the adjacent Lis na Rann Island formed part of the *longphort*.¹¹ Since the publication of Dunrally Fort, a number of other sites have come to attention that may be comparable and will be discussed below. Included are enclosures at Shandon, Co. Waterford, on the River Maine, Co. Kerry,¹² and at Rossnaree, Co. Meath.

Analysis of Viking activity elsewhere suggested that it was unlikely that a *longphort* would have been constructed at Dunrally, 80km upriver from the sea, unless the Vikings had established a secure base in the vicinity of the estuary. For this reason, in the 1999 paper it was proposed that there was likely to be a *longphort* in the Waterford harbour area at a location other than that of the Hiberno-Norse town of Waterford (where extensive excavations had failed to discover early Viking remains).¹³ It seemed reasonable to assume that such a *longphort* would be at least as big as Dunrally Fort and that it would share similar characteristics. Precisely such a site was discovered in 2003 at Woodstown, Co. Waterford, during archaeological testing in advance of road building on the bank of the River Suir above Waterford city.

Road building operations in Co. Sligo brought to attention another probable Viking *longphort* situated at Knoxspark on the bank of the Ballysadare river. All of the sites mentioned will be described and discussed below. In the course of

Viking-Age Ireland', 282; C. Downham, 'Vikings in Southern Uí Néill', *Peritia*, 17-18 (2003-4), 235. 6 E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow: Dunrally Fort, a possible Viking *longphort* in Co. Laois', *Archaeology Ireland*, 9:3 (1995), 30-2; Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp 123-59. 7 E.P. Kelly, 'Investigation of ancient fords on the River Suck', *Inland Waterways News*, 20:1 (1993), 4-5. 8 E.P. Kelly and E. O'Donovan, 'A Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard, Co. Clare', *Archaeology Ireland*, 12:4 (1998), 13-16. 9 E.P. Kelly, 'Recent investigations at Navan', *Riocht na Midhe*, 7:2 (1982-3), 76-85. 10 T. Fanning, 'Ballaghkeeran Little, Athlone, Co. Westmeath', *Medieval Archaeology*, 27 (1983), 221; Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', p. 149, n. 5. 11 Ibid., p. 141. 12 M. Connolly et al., *Underworld: death and burial in Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry* (Bray, 2005), pp 172-3. 13 Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', p. 133.

the debate generated by the publication of Dunrally Fort and subsequent discoveries, critics pointed to the failure to identify the *longphort* of Dublin as a factor that undermined the proposition that the *longphort* was a recognizable monument type. This is a matter that will also be discussed below.

In 2004, in an effort to gain more general acceptance for the *longphort* phenomenon, a research project was established to identify positively the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill at Annagassan. This *longphort* has important historical information attaching to it and the site was suspected to have survived in a virtual 'green field' state. The discovery of the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill and trial excavations conducted in 2010 will be outlined and discussed in this essay.

Most of the sites that will be discussed have not been excavated and some caution is therefore required in their interpretation. Nevertheless, what excavated and associated finds there are indicate clearly the Scandinavian character of a number of the sites. There is now a critical mass of information available, sufficient to enable acceptance of the Viking *longphort* in Ireland as a site type.

Longphort locations appear to have been chosen carefully so as to maximize the defensive potential of the terrain and to minimize the degree of fortification required. Because a primary objective of the Viking *longphort* was the protection of ships, it follows naturally that they must have had easy access to navigable water. A D-shaped earthwork flanking water is common, but variations occur depending on the nature of the terrain. Embanked promontories also feature and, where available, tributary streams and marshes were used for defensive purposes.

A number of D-shaped earthworks flanking water are known in Scandinavia, such as those at Aarhus, Birka, Löddeköpinge and Västergrarn. These sites, however, all appear to date later than the earliest Irish *longphuirt* and could not have served as models. Hedeby (Haithabu) was surrounded by a similar enclosure and, although the settlement appears to have been founded in the eighth century, it does not seem to have been enclosed until the tenth century.¹⁴ A D-shaped, ditched enclosure surrounding a settlement has been identified at Ribe in Denmark, dating to the early ninth century, although the bank and ditch there are relatively slight and do not appear to be defensive in their primary function.¹⁵

It seems likely, therefore, that the *longphort* is a monument type that arose out of the need to protect Viking fleets and armies operating in hostile territory. In proposing the *longphort* as a class of monument, John Maas and I drew attention to the destruction of a Viking fortification on the River Dyle at Louvain, which

¹⁴ M. Axboe, 'Danish kings and dendrochronology: archaeological insights into the early history of the Danish state' in G. Ausenda (ed.), *After empire: towards an ethnology of Europe's barbarians* (San Marino, 1995), p. 220. ¹⁵ C. Feveile, 'Ribe: continuity or discontinuity from the eighth to the twelfth century?' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 97–106.

is recorded in the Annals of Fulda for 891.¹⁶ The fort is described as having been surrounded by a ditch, with a marsh on one side and the bank of the river on the other. Like Longphort Rothlaibh, this site was attacked and destroyed in the autumn, when the surrounding marshy ground would have been at its driest.¹⁷

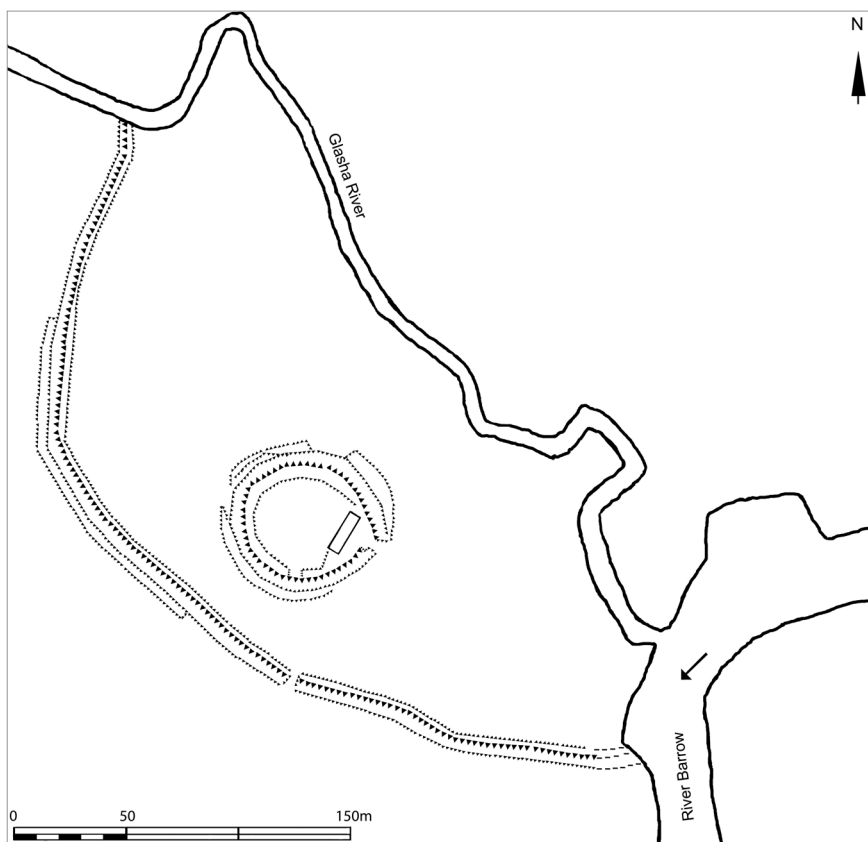
In Britain, pioneering work by James Dyer sought to identify Viking fortifications associated with the Danelaw frontier.¹⁸ Conclusive evidence of a Viking fortification was found in excavations by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle at the monastic site of Repton in Derbyshire. Here, a D-shaped enclosure was constructed as a winter camp for the Viking army of 873–4. The River Trent forms one side, while the rest of the site is surrounded by a D-shaped bank and ditch into which a pre-existing monastic church was incorporated as a gatehouse. Extensive Viking remains were uncovered there, including weapons and burials.¹⁹ The interior measured only 100m across, which seemed surprisingly small for a site that was associated with a large army, especially when compared with the scale of some of the Irish sites. The possibility must now be considered that the Repton earthwork is not the main Viking fortification; rather, it is likely that the enclosure was the citadel of a much more extensive monument.

Another Viking winter camp known from an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 872 is Torksey in Lincolnshire, also on the River Trent. Julian Richards, Dawn Hadley, Mark Blackburn and Gareth Williams have researched recent metal-detector finds from Torksey, including a large number of weights, hacksilver and coins that appear to be associated with the camp,²⁰ though no enclosing fortifications have yet been found. Investigations are also taking place into another probable Viking camp in Yorkshire (known as ARSNY) that has produced similar material. The location has not been revealed, to protect it from treasure-hunting activities. The possibility that the English sites are broadly comparable to the Irish *longphort* sites is the subject of ongoing study. Here the focus will be on *longphort* sites in Ireland.

DUNRALLY FORT, CO. LAOIS²¹

In 849 a fleet of 140 ships arrived in Ireland and sought to impose its authority over the Viking garrisons of Dublin and Linn Duachaill. This culminated in the rival Viking groups fighting a naval battle at Carlingford in 852. The internal

¹⁶ Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', p. 140. ¹⁷ Ibid. ¹⁸ J. Dyer, 'Earthworks of the Danelaw frontier' in P.J. Fowler (ed.), *Archaeology and landscape: essays for L.V. Grinsell* (London, 1972), pp 222–36. ¹⁹ M. Biddle and B. Kjolbye-Biddle, 'Repton and the Vikings', *Antiquity*, 66 (1992), 36–51; J.D. Richards, *Viking-Age England* (London, 1991), p. 23. ²⁰ M. Blackburn, 'The Viking winter camp at Torksey, 872–3' in M.A.S. Blackburn (ed.), *Viking coinage and currency in the British Isles* (London, 2011), pp 221–64. ²¹ Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow'; Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp



4.1 Plan of Dunrally Fort, Vicarstown, Co. Laois (after E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois' in P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999)).

Viking strife appears to have triggered a movement of Vikings to the south-east of the country, leading to the foundation of new Viking bases, including one on the River Barrow in Co. Laois called Longphort Rothlaibh, 'the *longphort* of Rodulf'. Rodulf was active on the Nore and Barrow rivers during the 850s, attacking initially from a base in the Waterford harbour area, a site that can in all likelihood now be identified as Woodstown. Longphort Rothlaibh was destroyed on 9 September 862 by the combined forces of the kings of Laois and Osraige.²²

In 1838 John O'Donovan identified the fort of Rothlaibh as a site on the River Barrow at Vicarstown, Co. Laois, now called Dunrally Fort (fig. 4.1).²³ The

123–59. ²² Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp 134–6. ²³ M. O'Flanagan (ed.), 'Letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the Queen's

monument is located strategically on the west bank of the River Barrow, at the place where it is joined by the River Glasha and where the ancient territories of Uí Failge, Loígis and Uí Muiredaig met. The *longphort* has two main components. There is an outer D-shaped enclosure, flanked by the two rivers, measuring 360 by 150m, and a central oval enclosure measuring 52 by 41m. The earthworks are substantial, with the main bank of the outer enclosure measuring 3.8m in width. Outside this there is a ditch 5.3m wide, which is partly water-filled, and a counterscarp bank. The central enclosure is an oval raised area enclosed by an inner bank with an exterior height of 4.5m. It has a water-filled ditch 7m wide with a counterscarp bank. The site was protected by an extensive area of marsh and is situated close to an important crossing place on the Barrow at Vicarstown Bridge and beside a pool in the Barrow at its junction with the Glasha. The potential of the site has not yet been tested by archaeological excavation.²⁴

WOODSTOWN, CO. WATERFORD

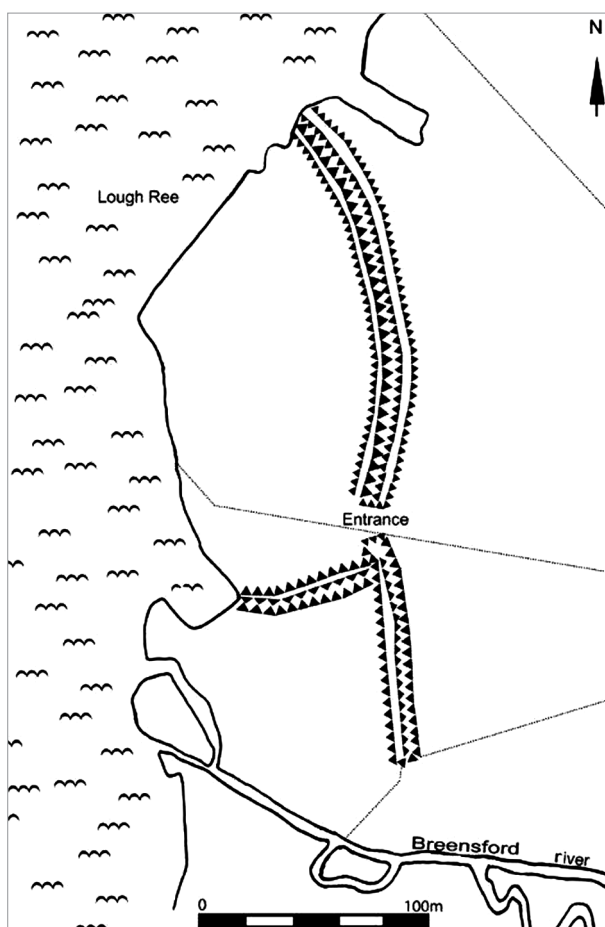
Having determined the *longphort* as a monument type, it was possible to predict, in considerable detail, the existence and form of the Woodstown *longphort* five years before the site was discovered in the course of pre-development testing.²⁵ Woodstown is located upstream from Waterford on the south bank of the River Suir, which formed the boundary between the territories of the Déisi Muman and Osraige.

Two concentric, roughly D-shaped ditches enclosed the site at Woodstown.²⁶ The earliest (inner ditch) was 2.2m wide by 0.6m deep and associated with a bank topped with stake-holes, suggesting a palisade fence. The second, more substantial outer ditch was up to 4m wide and 1.3m deep and, like the rampart ditch at Linn Duachaill, was recut several times. The *longphort*, which extended along the riverbank for about 500m, is partly protected by marshland.²⁷

The discovery of a warrior burial with accompanying grave-goods suggests that the site had a military aspect, while finds such as a Kufic coin, silver ingots and weights show that the inhabitants of Woodstown were also engaging in trading activities. Viking ships were being constructed or maintained on the site,

County collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1838', 2 vols (typescript, Bray, 1933), i, p. 79; J. O'Hanlon et al., *History of the Queen's County*, 2 vols (London 1907–14; repr. Kilkenny, 1981), i, p. 291. ²⁴ A fragment of a Kufic dirham discovered 10km downstream at Athy may relate to the activities of Vikings based at Dunrally (NMI, file IA/103/2013). ²⁵ Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', p. 133. ²⁶ To date, no detailed plan of the enclosure, based on excavation and geophysical survey results, has been published. ²⁷ S. Harrison (ed.), 'Woodstown 6 supplementary research project' (unpublished report by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, for the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007), p. 11.

4.2 Plan of Ballaghkeeran Little, Co. Westmeath, based on the Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet and aerial photography.



which has produced hundreds of ships' nails.²⁸ There was evidence of metal-working in the form of crucible fragments, burnishing stones, ingots of iron, copper and silver, stone moulds, tuyère and furnace fragments and slag.²⁹

TWO SITES ON LOUGH REE

An earthwork at Ballaghkeeran Little, Lough Ree, Co. Westmeath, was excavated by the late Tom Fanning,³⁰ who considered it likely that the site was a Viking *longphort*. The Irish annals provide evidence of Viking activity on Lough Ree,

²⁸ J. Bill, 'Woodstown, Co. Waterford 02E441. Report on examination of iron nail X-rays' (unpublished report prepared for Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, 2006), p. 4.

²⁹ Harrison, 'Woodstown 6', p. 36; I. Russell and M.F. Hurley (eds), *Woodstown: a Viking-Age settlement in Co. Waterford* (Dublin, 2014), pp 115–29. ³⁰ Fanning, 'Ballaghkeeran

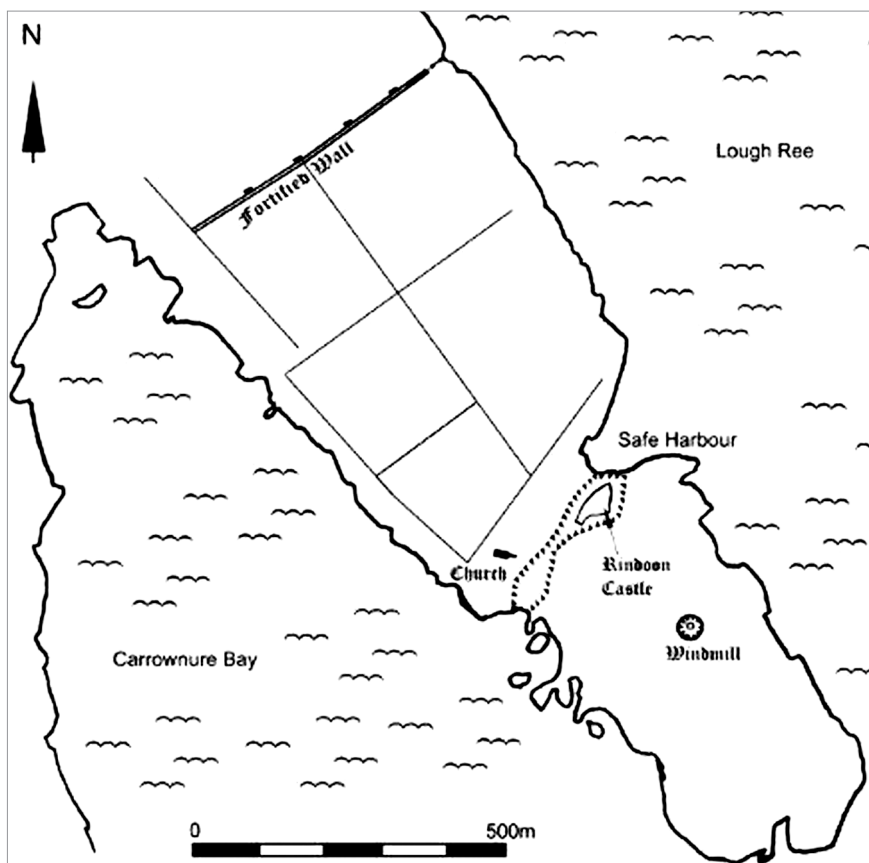
where a *longphort* was founded in 845. This phase of Viking activity on Lough Ree is associated with a leader named Turgesius.³¹ Viking fleets from Limerick are recorded as being active on Lough Ree in 922,³² 924³³ and 932.³⁴ The Ballaghkeeran Little fortress has two enclosed areas (fig. 4.2). A wide, curved ditch cut between two banks defined the eastern and southern sides of a roughly D-shaped area of slightly elevated ground on the lakeshore. The ground slopes gently towards the lake that borders the western and northern edges of the site. Enclosed low ground to the south of the D-shaped enclosure is bordered by the lakeshore on its western side, by the Breensford river at the southern end, and by a bank and ditch along the eastern side that runs from the Breensford river to join the banks and ditch of the D-shaped enclosure. The entire enclosed area measures about 200 by 100m.

Alongside the Breensford river there is an embanked hollow feature that Fanning interpreted as a naust or shelter used for the repair or storage of boats. The Breensford river forms the boundary between the baronies of Kilkenny West and Brawny – ancient territories respectively of the Cuircne and the Calraige, petty kingdoms subject to the Clann Cholmáin of Mide. Low-lying marshy ground surrounds the site. Trial excavation also produced evidence of metalworking in the form of quantities of slag. Two samples of charcoal from the ground surface beneath the main inner bank yielded radiocarbon dates that indicate that the rampart belongs to some time after the fourth to fifth centuries AD.

Silver hoards found in the vicinity might relate to trading activities by Vikings based at Ballaghkeeran Little. A hoard of ten pieces of hacksilver was found nearby on a small island at Creaghduff. Another nearby island is Hare Island, where hoards of Viking gold and silver have been discovered. One contained ten Viking gold armlets weighing 5kg in total and a second hoard contained an unknown number of silver armlets and ingots.³⁵ At an unspecified location in Kilkenny West (an area on the south-eastern shore of Lough Ree that includes Ballaghkeeran Little), a hoard of more than sixty Anglo-Saxon coins of Edgar, deposited around 970, was found. The hoard also contained an unknown number of silver ingots bent into rings.³⁶

It is possible that Ballaghkeeran Little is the site of the *longphort* founded in 845, or it may be one of a number of Viking fortifications on the lakeshore. Rindoon Castle is a medieval construction on a peninsula on the western side of Lough Ree and the name Rindoon (also spelt Rindown) means 'the promontory of the fortress'. According to John O'Donovan, 'the castle built by the English and O'Connors on this peninsula stands within the earthen *dún* erected by Turgesius'.³⁷ A ditch cut across the peninsula between two inlets, the northerly

Little', p. 221. 31 *AU*, s.a. 844. 32 *Ibid.*, s.a. 921. 33 *AFM*, s.a. 922. 34 *AU*, s.a. 931. 35 Sheehan, 'The *longphort* in Viking-Age Ireland', p. 291. 36 J. Sheehan, 'Colonel Sempronius Stretton and the reprovenancing of a Viking-Age hoard' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 380–9. 37 J. O'Donovan, 'Rindoon Castle, Co. Roscommon',



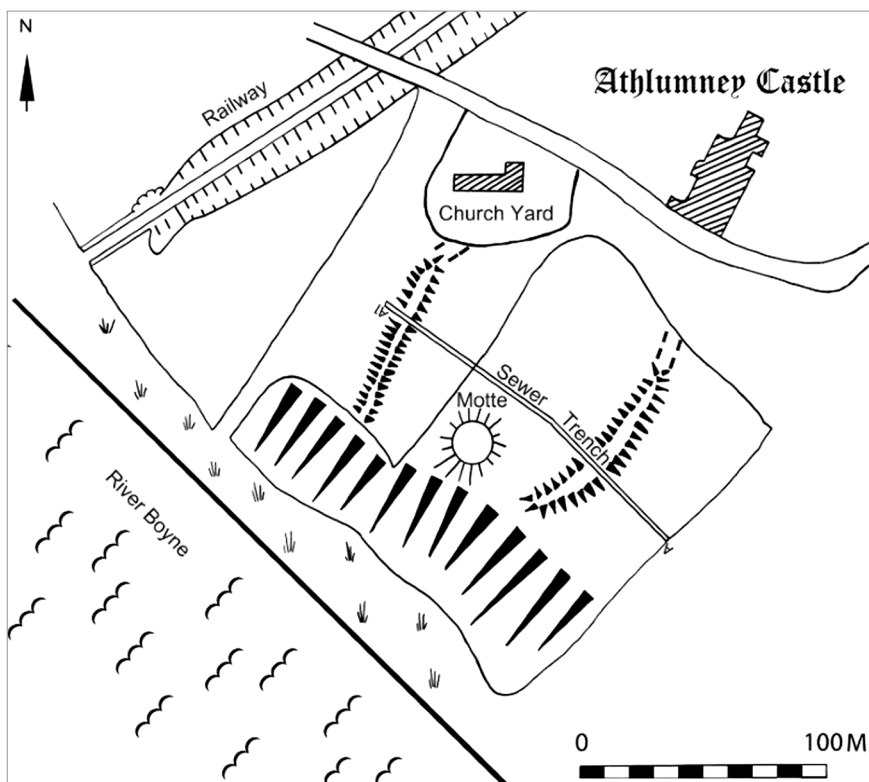
4.3 Plan of Rindoon, Warren, Co. Roscommon, based on the Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet.

one of which is called Safe Harbour, may be on the original site of a Viking rampart, perhaps redug in medieval times to protect Rindoon Castle (fig. 4.3).

ATHLUMNEY, CO. MEATH

Earthworks in proximity to a medieval castle at Athlumney, Co. Meath, may be a Viking site known as Dún Dubchomair.³⁸ The earthworks came to attention when a sewage scheme trench was dug in 1978 (fig. 4.4).³⁹ The interpretation of this site is not without difficulties. Two sections of eroded bank are visible on the ground, but examination of the excavated trench showed that one section of bank

Journal of the Old Athlone Society, 1:4 (1974–5), 288. 38 M. Clinton, 'Settlement dynamics in Co. Meath: the kingdom of Lóegaire', *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 386–8. 39 Kelly, 'Recent



4.4 Plan of Athlumney, Co. Meath.

lies on the inside of a deep ditch, while the other lies outside a ditch. It may be that what has survived consists of a section of an inner bank and a section of counterscarp bank, but whether the two ditch sections represent one continuous feature remains to be established for certain. The two sections of the ditch represent substantial features. The eastern example measures 1.75m in width and 3.4m in depth, and a single oyster shell (*Ostrea edulis*) was found at the base of it.⁴⁰ The western section of ditch measures 4m in width and 2m in depth. Inserted into the adjacent bank there was a V-shaped pit containing charcoal and burnt soil, which may represent the base of a burnt palisade post.⁴¹ A number of other features were found in the section between the banks and ditches, including pits, possible paving and burnt layers. Geophysical survey of the site should prove invaluable as an aid to interpreting the features, but no such work has yet been undertaken.

investigations at Navan'. ⁴⁰ Ibid., 76. ⁴¹ Ibid., 79, fig. 2.

If the earthworks did originally form a continuous rampart, they would have enclosed an area room across, flanking the River Boyne.⁴² However, there is a steep slope leading down to the river that would have made it difficult to take boats into the safety of the proposed enclosure. Within the enclosure there is a small mound, generally thought to be an Anglo-Norman motte that may have been built on the site of an earlier Viking citadel.

Located near the confluence of the rivers Boyne and Blackwater (known anciently as Dubchomar), the proposed fortress was at a major crossing point, situated on the boundary between the kingdoms of Lóegaire, Síl nÁedo Sláine and Gailenga.⁴³ An account in the *Life of St Findchua* describes the presence of a Viking fleet at Dún Dubchomair. When the Vikings refused to give a guarantee not to engage in acts of plunder, they were attacked by the king of Tara and a party of clerics who accompanied St Findchua. In the ensuing battle the Vikings were defeated, following which Dún Dubchomair was given to St Findchua.

And this was the last evil which they did to them; slaying their gillies, burning their ships, and making a cairn of their heads and a mound of their garments. So in that wise Findchua expelled the marauders. His own award is (then) given to Findchua, to wit, Dún Dubchomair.⁴⁴

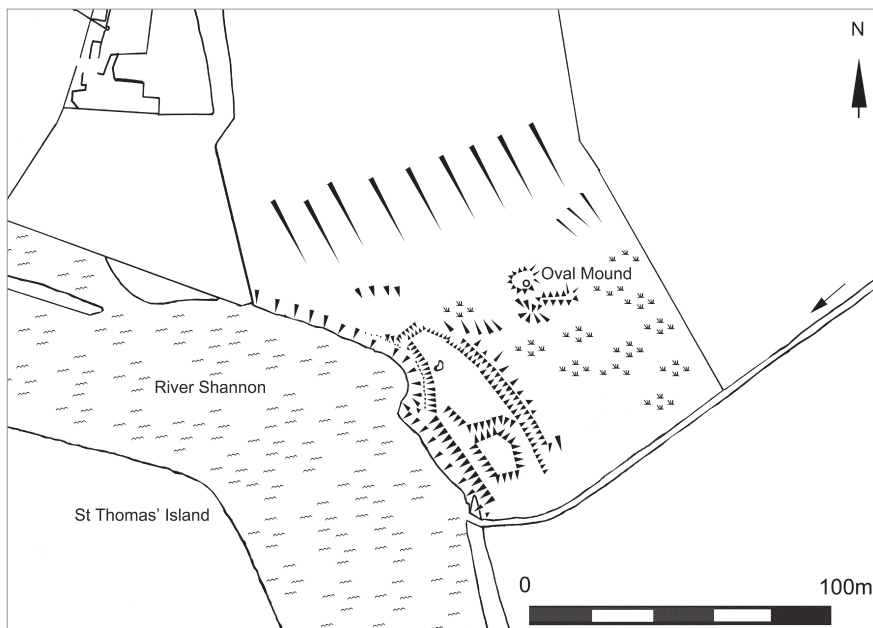
The presence of a medieval church within a graveyard enclosure immediately adjacent to the earthworks may not therefore be fortuitous. The site is also in immediate proximity to where a Viking burial, containing a horse harness and mounts together with human and animal remains including the skull of a horse, was found during railway construction in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵

FAIRYHILL, NEAR ATHLUNKARD, CO. CLARE

In 845 a Viking fleet on the Shannon Estuary raided inland across Co. Limerick to capture Forindán, the abbot of Armagh (then making a circuit of the district), at Cluain Comarda, or Colmanswell in the barony of Connello Upper.⁴⁶ This raid was probably related to a major two-year campaign by the Vikings along the Shannon system that spread into the Southern Uí Néill kingdom of Mide and also into Connacht and Munster. During this campaign the Vikings founded a base or bases on Lough Ree in 845. In keeping with Viking practice elsewhere, it

⁴² *Ibid.*, 79–80. ⁴³ Clinton, 'Settlement dynamics', 402. ⁴⁴ W. Stokes (ed. and trans.), 'Life of Findchua of Brigown', *Lives of saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), p. 236.

⁴⁵ Clinton, 'Settlement dynamics', 387–8; S. Harrison, 'Viking graves and grave-goods in Ireland' in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), p. 72; W. Wilde, *A descriptive catalogue of the antiquities of animal materials and bronze in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1861), 573–4. ⁴⁶ F.J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (London, 1973), p. 223.



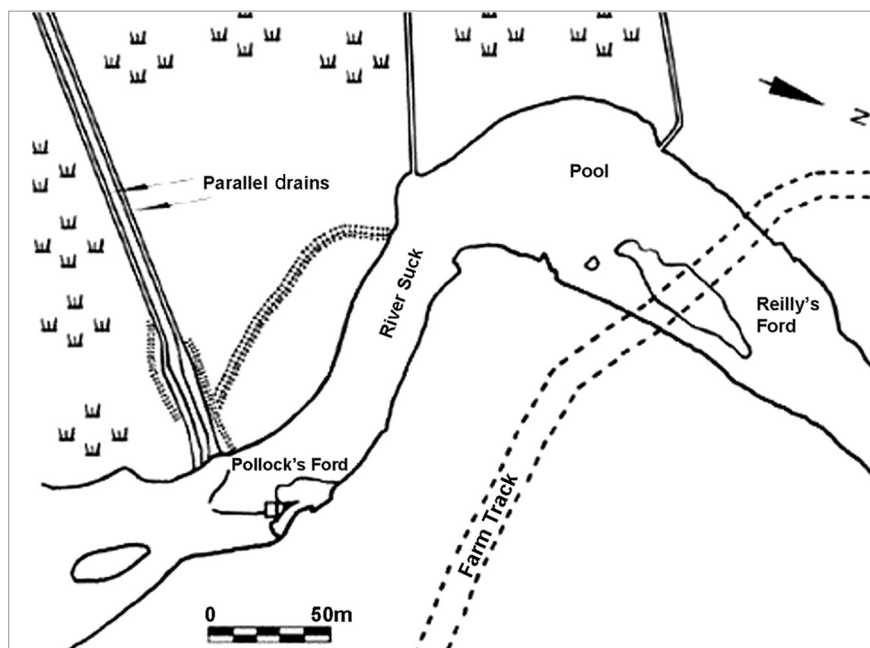
4.5 Plan of Fairyhill, near Athlunkard, Co. Clare (after E.P. Kelly and E. O'Donovan, 'A Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard, Co. Clare', *Archaeology Ireland*, 12:4 (1998), 13–16).

seems likely that they also had a base or bases in or near the Shannon Estuary to secure their rear.

At the first bend of the Shannon above Limerick city there is an important crossing point on the river at Athlunkard bridge. The name Athlunkard means 'the ford of the *longphort*' and this name may refer to earthworks in the nearby townland of Fairyhill, Co. Clare, opposite St Thomas' Island. There is a D-shaped enclosure on a riverbank protected by an extensive area of marsh and a tributary stream.⁴⁷ A second important ford was located on the river below St Thomas' Island. This is named Laxweir, which, significantly, incorporates the Norse word *lax* meaning 'salmon'. The site is situated on the boundary between the territories of the Eóganacht and the Dál gCais at a place where the Shannon is still tidal.

The enclosure is 75m long and 30m wide, and surrounded by a bank, ditch and counterscarp bank. Within it there is an oval raised area measuring 20 by 12.5m, protected by a ditch and counterscarp bank (fig. 4.5). It is likely that the D-shaped enclosure was only a part of a larger base since the Vikings are likely

⁴⁷ Kelly and O'Donovan 'Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard'.



4.6 Plan of the earthwork at Kellysgrove, Co. Galway.

to have established themselves on St Thomas' Island as well. Outside the enclosure, 25m to the north-east, there is a small oval mound in boggy ground. It measures 10 by 9m and rises 0.3m above the surface of the marsh. Its age and function have not been determined, but it may be a burial monument.

The D-shaped enclosure first came to attention when objects were found in the raised central area in the course of illegal metal-detecting activities. The finds were all of iron and consisted of a spearhead, a spear butt, a ring and a plough coulter. A woodworker's axe, with part of a wooden handle attached, was found in the river close by. Two small conical silver ingots that may relate to trading activities associated with the *longphort* were found separately, one on the riverbank opposite, the other a short distance upstream.

KELLYSGROVE, CO. GALWAY

An earthwork on the bank of the River Suck at Kellysgrove, Co. Galway, is similar in dimensions to the Fairyhill site. The river forms the boundary between the territories of Uí Maine and Delbna Nuadat. An eroded rampart consisting of a ditch outside a bank forms a roughly D-shaped earthwork 100 by 40m in extent (fig. 4.6). Next to the earthwork is a deep pool, with a ford at either end.

Pollock's Ford is at the downstream end, with Reilly's Ford upstream of the pool. The south-eastern end of the enclosure beside Pollock's Ford has been obscured by the digging of two parallel drains that may once have been a small stream. The approaches to the site from the landward side are impeded by extensive tracts of marshy ground and peat bog.

A Viking-type axe and an early medieval iron spearhead were found in the pool beside the earthwork. The axe is likely to be eleventh century, while the spearhead is not sufficiently diagnostic to date accurately. Later medieval finds such as a ring-pommel sword and a halberd were also recovered from the pool.⁴⁸

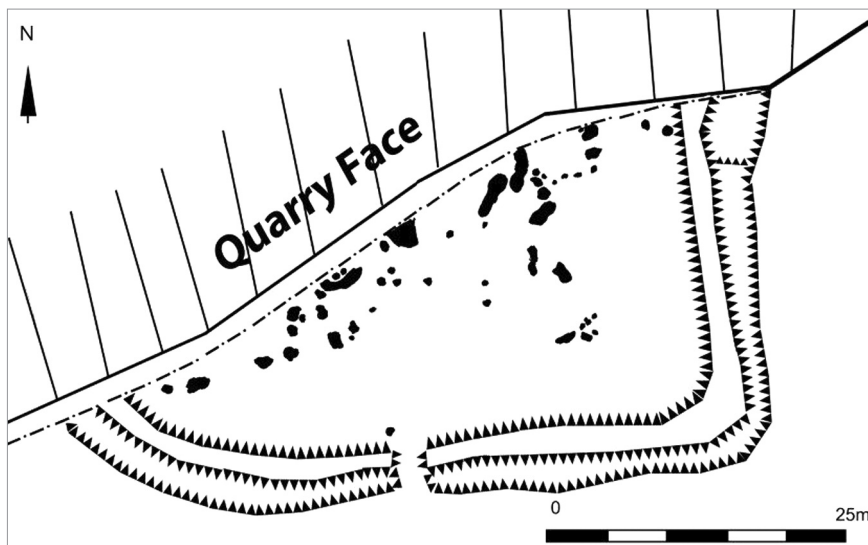
SHANDON, CO. WATERFORD⁴⁹

The presence of this site was first indicated in the 1930s and 1940s when L. Mongey, a local pharmacist, investigated the fill of a ditch exposed in a quarry face. Finds included a bramble-headed bronze stick pin, a bronze bell, a bone pin, an iron hook, animal teeth and bones, some of which were burnt, as well as iron slag, charcoal, a whetstone, a portion of antler with cut-marks, fish bones, oyster shells, cockle shells, an iron fishing hook, five fragments of a human skull, an iron-tanged knife, fourteen shards of well-fired reddish pottery, slag, an iron knife and the proximal end of a whale humerus.⁵⁰

In recent years the site was investigated through testing in advance of a housing development project. The ditch investigated by Mongey turned out to be that of a sub-rectangular enclosure on the bank of the Colligan river at the first bend upstream from Dungarvan, about 2km from the sea. Like the Athlumney earthworks, the site is on high ground overlooking the river. The precise relationship of the site to the river cannot be stated with certainty since the northern area abutting the river was removed by quarrying during the nineteenth century. The surviving dimensions are 75 by 35m, but the site was clearly more extensive prior to quarrying (fig. 4.7). A wooden palisade stood inside a ditch 4m wide and 1.2m deep, and a defensive bank also seems to have been located inside the ditch.⁵¹ Evidence for metalworking was found, including a copper ingot, slag and iron nails. Other finds were iron pins, animal and fish bones, and oyster shells. The earliest known activity on the site is dated by a silver Hiberno-Norse coin dating to 1066–87.⁵²

A significant find from Shandon is a highly decorated bone object, known as a motif-piece, of tenth- or eleventh-century date.⁵³ The object was found in 1917,

⁴⁸ Kelly, 'Investigation of ancient fords'. ⁴⁹ S. Elder et al., 'Archaeological excavation report ooEo422 ext., o1Eo327 ext., o2Eo809; Shandon td., Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, medieval moated site', *Eachtra Journal*, 14 (2007), 1–109. ⁵⁰ Ibid., 4. ⁵¹ Ibid., 10. ⁵² Ibid., 6. ⁵³ M. Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland: Irish art, 300BC–1500AD* (Dublin, 1983), p. 152.



4.7 Plan of Shandon, Co. Waterford (after S. Elder et al., 'Archaeological excavation report 00E0422 ext., 01E0327 ext., 02E0809; Shandon td., Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, medieval moated site', *Eachtra Journal*, 14 (2007), 1–109). The dark areas are archaeological features identified but not excavated. The probable position of the bank has been added.

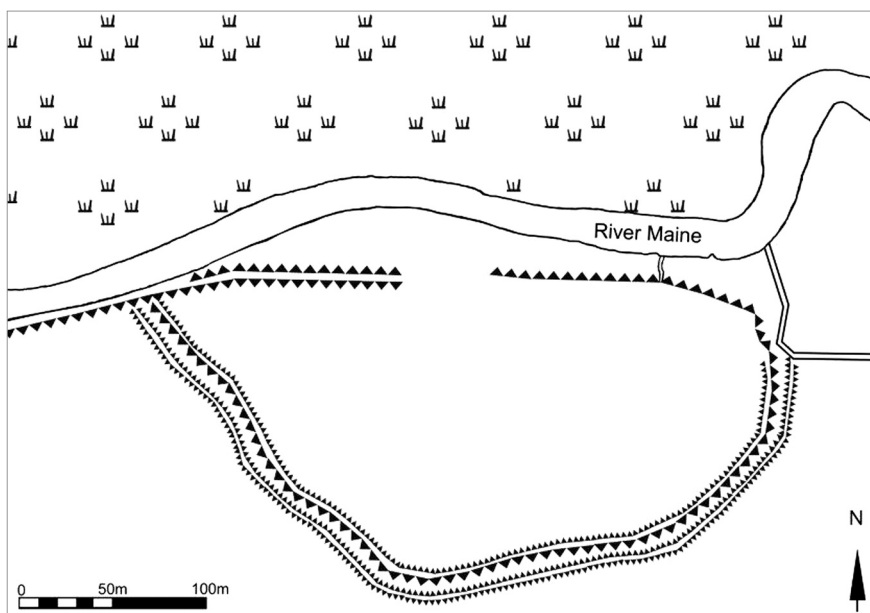
but it is not clear whether it was associated with the deposits investigated by Mongey or from a cave nearby that was also quarried.⁵⁴ Antiquarians who investigated the cave between 1859 and 1896 reported the skeletal remains of extinct fauna, including mammoth, reindeer, wolf and bear. No evidence of human activity was reported, but it is possible that Viking ritual activity took place in Shandon Cave. Elsewhere Viking burials were found in Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry, along with evidence for other ritual activity.⁵⁵ It is reported that three human skeletons were found buried beneath the soil in the same field as Shandon Cave.⁵⁶

RATH MORE, CO. KERRY

The presence of Vikings on the Kerry coast is referred to in the Annals of the Four Masters and the Annals of Ulster for 812, when a number of them were massacred by the Eóganacht Locha Léin.⁵⁷ The annals further report that a party of Vikings attacked the coastal monastery of Skellig Michael in 824 and carried

⁵⁴ Elder et al., 'Archaeological excavation report', 3–4. ⁵⁵ Connolly et al., *Underworld*.

⁵⁶ Elder et al., 'Archaeological excavation report', 2. ⁵⁷ *AFM*, s.a. 807; *AU*, s.a. 811.



4.8 Plan of the earthwork at Rath More, Co. Kerry, based on the Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet and aerial photography. The monument is now in a ruinous condition owing to land-clearance activities.

off the abbot Étgal, who died soon afterwards.⁵⁸ Archaeological discoveries appear to support the historical accounts of the Viking presence on the Kerry coast. Reappraisal of excavations conducted by M.J. O'Kelly on Beginish Island, Co. Kerry, indicates the presence of Scandinavian settlement that may span the period from the ninth to the twelfth century.⁵⁹ Two unexcavated rectangular houses on the island may represent a ninth- or tenth-century phase of Viking occupation since they appear to be associated with a soapstone vessel, a rotary whetstone, a bone cylinder and a bronze ringed pin.⁶⁰ One of six oval houses was excavated. It was sunken, with a ramped entrance and a corbelled dry-stone wall, roofed originally with timbers covered with thatch or sods. Carved into the inner lintel above the entrance was a runic inscription and finds included a bone or ivory cruciform-headed pin, part of a comb and a bronze disc-headed pin. These suggested that it was a Hiberno-Scandinavian house, in use during the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries.⁶¹

⁵⁸ *AU*, s.a. 823. ⁵⁹ J. Sheehan et al., 'A Viking-Age maritime haven: a reassessment of the island settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry', *JLA*, 10 (2001), 93–119; M.J. O'Kelly, 'An island settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry', *PRIA*, 57C (1956), 159–94; M.J. O'Kelly, 'A stone bowl of Viking type from Beginish Island, Co. Kerry', *JRSAI*, 91 (1961), 64–8. ⁶⁰ Sheehan et al., 'Viking-Age maritime haven', 109. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 110–11.

Among recent finds from Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry, were Viking burials along with ringed pins, silver ingots and hacksilver, and a range of iron tools, implements and weapons. Bone objects included a decorated bone handle, a comb and gaming pieces. Glass and amber beads were also present, as was a large quantity of animal bones.⁶²

Entries in the Fragmentary Annals and *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* indicate that a Viking fortress called Dún Máinne was destroyed in 867 by an alliance of the Ciarraige Luachra, Eóganacht Locha Léin and Uí Fidgeinte – the three most prominent kingdoms in west Munster.⁶³ Donnchadh Ó Corráin suggested that ‘the most likely site of the Viking fortress (*dún*) and its settlement is near Castlemaine Bridge, on the north side of the navigable Maine, where there was a medieval Geraldine castle’.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Ó Corráin now accepts an alternative suggestion as being more likely. This takes the form of a large D-shaped enclosure on the bank of the River Maine at Rath More, Co. Kerry.⁶⁵ This fortress was defended by a strong rampart consisting of a ditch between two banks, enclosing an area measuring 250 by 175m (fig. 4.8). The banks are up to 6.8m wide and 2.4m high and the ditch is 3.7m wide. The site is located within the navigable tidal reach of the river,⁶⁶ which forms the boundary between the ancient kingdoms of Ciarraige Luachra and Eóganacht Locha Léin.

In addition to Dún Máinne, it is possible that the Vikings had a number of other *longphuirt* in the area. One possibility is a D-shaped enclosure measuring 125 by 90m that flanks the River Maine close to its confluence with a tributary river at Castledrum, Co. Kerry. Another potential site is in the townland of Lonart on the shores of Castlemaine harbour, near the outlet of the river, which seems to preserve the term *longphort* in its name.⁶⁷

KNOXSPARK, CO. SLIGO

Earthworks at Knoxspark, Co. Sligo, were partially excavated prior to road building operations during the mid-1990s and a reassessment of the excavation results suggests that this is also the site of a Viking *longphort*.⁶⁸ Knoxspark is located on the boundary between the ancient territories of the Ua hEghra and the Uí Ailello and in close proximity to the boundary of the territory of the Cenél Cairpri. The site controls important river crossings and land routes, including a major route into central Connacht through the Collooney Gap.⁶⁹

62 Connolly et al., *Underworld*, pp 83–154. 63 D. Ó Corráin, ‘Vikings III: Dún Mainne’, *Peritia*, 10 (1996), 273. 64 Ibid. 65 D. Ó Corráin, ‘The Vikings and Iveragh’ in J. Crowley and J. Sheehan (eds), *The Iveragh peninsula: a cultural atlas of the Ring of Kerry* (Cork, 2009), pp 141–7. 66 Connolly et al., *Underworld*, p. 173. 67 Ibid. 68 E.P. Kelly, ‘Re-evaluation of a supposed inland promontory fort: Knoxspark, Co. Sligo: Iron Age fortress or Viking stronghold’ in G. Cooney et al. (eds), *Relics of old decency: archaeological studies in later prehistory. Festschrift for Barry Raftery* (Dublin, 2009), pp 485–97. 69 C. Mount, ‘The

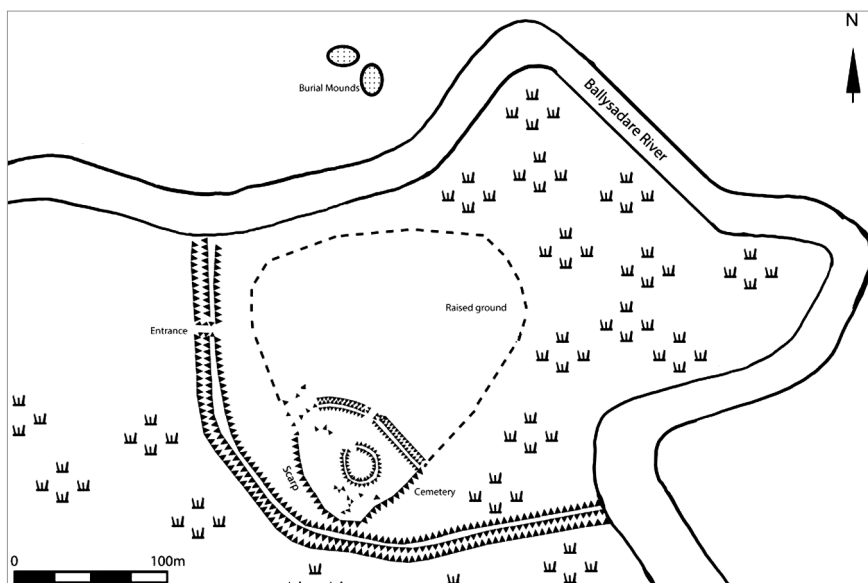
What was initially identified as an Iron Age promontory fort, formed by a bank and ditch dug across a low ridge, is more likely to be the central strongpoint, or citadel, of a much larger monument of Viking type. A series of radiocarbon dates from Knoxspark indicate that the site belongs to the early Viking Age.⁷⁰ A large D-shaped enclosure (415 by 265m) within which the citadel is located was overlooked by the excavator (fig. 4.9). An outer rampart had been impacted upon by railway construction during the nineteenth century, but it is shown as a field boundary on the first-edition six-inch Ordnance Survey map.⁷¹ The site is situated on an oxbow bend of the Ballysadare river. Excavations were focused on the rampart of the citadel and on a rectangular cemetery enclosure within it (fig. 4.10), although these features were not investigated fully. The cemetery enclosure yielded a minimum of 187 burials and a focal ship burial appears to have been located centrally. The ship burial was partly defined by a stone kerb and cairn material. A description by the excavator suggests the former presence of boat or ship timbers as follows: 'Many nails were recovered in the upper part of this horizon, mainly above the level of the burials. These were in curving linear rather than random arrangements and may mark the decayed walls of structures'.⁷²

A gold and amber roundel was discovered in the same layer as a deposit of cremated human remains and a broken glass bead that appears to have been burnt, possibly in a funeral pyre, came from the same stratigraphical context as the cremation, along with a copper tag. Also found were two cut fragments of silvered copper-alloy sheet, animal bone, iron artefacts and smelting slag, all dating to the ninth century.⁷³ A mark along one edge of the larger silvered copper-alloy fragment suggests that there was once a binding strip on it and it is possible that the roundel and silvered fragments derive from a house-shaped shrine. A copper-alloy pin from a ringed pin was found below the cairn material.

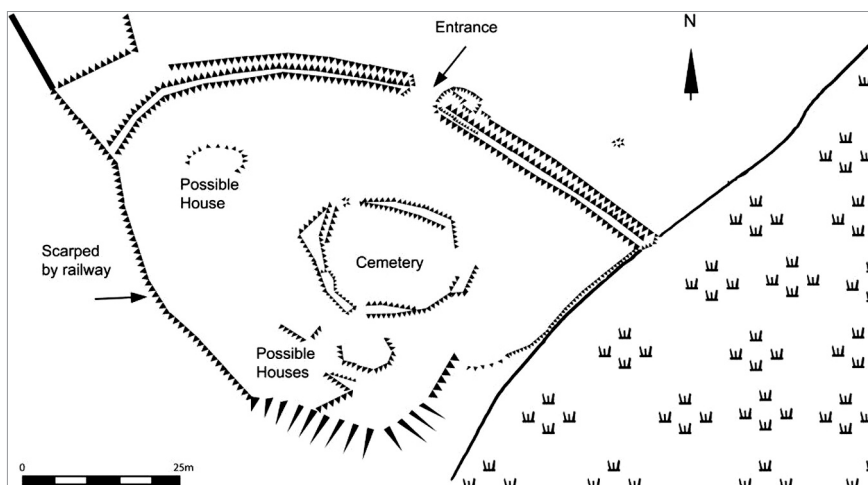
The inhumations surrounding the presumed ship burial appear to be mainly adults, of which many had been decapitated. In some graves the heads were missing, in others the decapitated heads were placed with the body, while some graves contained only heads. Children's remains were present, but were under-represented and some decapitated child victims were found in multiple burials. Mass graves of persons who died violent deaths are likely to be war graves.⁷⁴

Animal bones were found deposited ritually with ten of the inhumation burials. For example, Burial no. 80 contained a carefully placed cattle jawbone, while two carefully placed cattle teeth were found in Burial no. 30. These can be paralleled precisely in the Viking cemetery at Islandbridge, Dublin. In Burial no. 4, two adult males were buried together with their arms linked. One of the

promontory fort, inhumation cemetery and sub-rectangular enclosure at Knoxspark, Co. Sligo' in M.A. Timoney (ed.), *A celebration of Sligo: first essays for the Sligo Field Club* (Sligo, 2002), pp 104–5. ⁷⁰ Kelly, 'Re-evaluation of a supposed inland promontory fort', pp 488–9. ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 489, fig. 5. ⁷² Mount, 'Promontory fort', p. 107. ⁷³ *Ibid.* ⁷⁴ Kelly,



4.9 Plan of Knoxspark, Co. Sligo.



4.10 Plan of Knoxspark, Co. Sligo, showing the citadel and burial enclosure.

men was associated with a socketed iron spearhead. The other man's head had been cut off and placed separately in the grave. In Burial no. 46, a hone stone was associated with the skeleton of an adult.⁷⁵

'Re-evaluation of a supposed inland promontory fort', pp 489–90. ⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 490.

The excavator, Charles Mount, considered it possible that disturbance of many of the graves was due to looting for grave-goods. In two instances, broken fragments of bronze and iron appeared to be residual fragments left over from objects removed in this way. In Mount's opinion, other artefacts found in secondary contexts may originally have been associated with burials.⁷⁶ A glass bead from the enclosing wall of the Knoxspark cemetery appears to be of the same type as a bead found with a pair of oval brooches in a burial at Islandbridge, Dublin. Iron finds included a knife and a possible scramasax. Iron nails were also present, including examples that may be ships' nails.

Burial mounds on the opposite bank of the river in the townland of Ballysadare may be associated with the site, but this is by no means certain.⁷⁷ Grave-goods were present in the form of a twisted iron neck ornament and a small bronze ring.⁷⁸

There is historical and archaeological evidence for a strong Viking presence in the Sligo area. The annals refer to Viking raids on the monastic island of Inishmurray off the Sligo coast in 795⁷⁹ and 807,⁸⁰ while a passing reference in the Tripartite Life of St Patrick suggests that the monastery of Killaspugbrone, at the entrance to Ballysadare Bay, was occupied by Vikings as follows: 'and Patrick prophesied that that place would be deserted by the heathen, which thing came to pass'.⁸¹

Archaeological finds from the Sligo coast suggest the presence of Viking coastal settlement along the sea routes into Ballysadare Bay. Finds include an antler comb from Carrowdough; a bronze pin, an antler tine and human remains from Raghly Point; an antler tool from Kilboglashy; a weight from Woodpark and hacksilver from Streedagh.⁸² On a ringfort at Carrowreilly beside an ancient route that passed by Knoxspark and crossed central Connacht, a forged Kufic silver coin struck by the Volga Bulgars c.900–10 was found.⁸³ Like the Streedagh hacksilver, the coin may relate to trading activities associated with Knoxspark. Finds of an iron saw, an iron bar, bronze ringed pins, bone pins, a bone comb, a honestone and human bones at Keshcorran Caves, Co. Sligo,⁸⁴ may be indicative of Viking ritual activity similar to that found at Cloghermore Cave.

⁷⁶ I am grateful to Charles Mount for a detailed briefing about the finds and the circumstances of their discovery. ⁷⁷ J. Channing and H. Opie, 'Report on archaeological excavations of a burial ground, Ballysadare, Co. Sligo. 95E020, April 1995' (unpublished report lodged with the NMI and NMS, 1995); J. Channing and H. Opie, 'Report on archaeological excavations of a burial ground during construction of the Ballysadare–Collooney bypass, Co. Sligo. 95E020, phase 2, November 1996' (unpublished report lodged with the NMI and the NMS, 1996). ⁷⁸ H. Opie, 'Ballysadare burial ground', *Excavations* 1995 (1996), 77. ⁷⁹ *AI*, s.a. 795. ⁸⁰ *AFM*, s.a. 802. ⁸¹ *The tripartite Life of Patrick: with other documents relating to that saint*, ed. and trans. W. Stokes, 2 vols (London, 1887), i, p. 141. ⁸² Kelly, 'Re-evaluation of a supposed inland promontory fort', p. 492. ⁸³ *Ibid.*; M. Kenny, 'A Kufic coin fragment from Carrowreilly, Co. Sligo', *JGAHS*, 43 (1991), 170–3. ⁸⁴ NMI, topographical file.

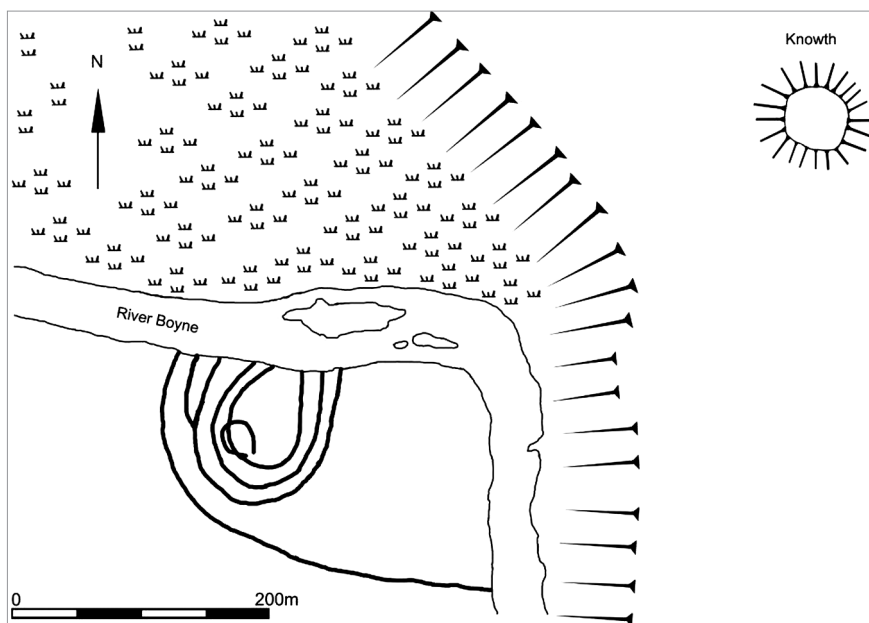
There are annalistic entries that may relate to the activities of Vikings operating from Knoxspark. In 844, 'a battle was gained over the Connachtmen by the Foreigners, in which Riagan, son of Fergus; Mughron, son of Diarmaid; and Áed, son of Catharnach, with many others, were slain'.⁸⁵ In the same year is recorded what may have been a related event: 'The plundering of Cuil-moine by the fleet of the Cailli; and a fortnight's siege was laid to them by Cearball, son of Dunlaing, and they were afterwards dreadfully slaughtered'.⁸⁶ O'Donovan identified Cuil-moine as Collooney, Co. Sligo,⁸⁷ but this is not accepted widely. Cearball was the king of Osraige who was involved in the destruction of Longphort Rothlaibh (Dunrally Fort) in 862. At this early stage in his reign (844), it is unlikely that he would have been campaigning in the north-west of the country, far distant from his south-eastern kingdom. Should O'Donovan's identification be broadly correct, then the besieged Viking fortress whose inhabitants were slaughtered could turn out to be Knoxspark, where the burial evidence provides proof of a massacre.

One need not rely on this particular annalistic reference to a massacre to find a context for the decapitated remains and multiple graves at Knoxspark. The historical sources show that Vikings were massacred on more than one occasion at the hands of the Connacht men. In 867 a party led by the jarls Bárith and Háimar set out to travel overland to Limerick, apparently along the mid-Connacht route that passes through Knoxspark and Carrowreilly. They were ambushed by the Connacht men and Háimar was killed. Bárith and his surviving followers were forced to abandon their plans and returned 'to the place from which they had come'.⁸⁸ The most likely place from which the Viking party set out and to which the survivors returned was Knoxspark. Further warfare is referred to in an entry for 888 in which a battle was won by the men of north Connacht over the Foreigners, in which Eloir, son of Bárith, was slain.⁸⁹

ROSSNAREE, CO. MEATH

In 837 a Viking fleet of sixty ships based on the Boyne acted in coordination with another similar-sized fleet on the Liffey to attack the adjoining Irish territories, targeting churches, forts and houses.⁹⁰ In 842 there was a Viking fleet on the Boyne at Linn Rois,⁹¹ where a *longphort* appears to have been established. Recent excavations at Rossnaree, Co. Meath, have revealed an enclosure on a low knoll forming a promontory on the south bank of the river, to the south-west of the royal site at Knowth, seat of the kings of Cianachta Breagh. Cutting off the promontory there appears to be a large D-shaped enclosure on the riverbank

⁸⁵ *AFM*, s.a. 844. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.* ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 470, n. k. ⁸⁸ *FA*, pp 128–9, no. 350. ⁸⁹ *AFM*, s.a. 888. ⁹⁰ *AU*, s.a. 836. ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, s.a. 841. The name Linn Rois means 'the pool of the promontory'.



4.11 Plan of Rossnaree, Co. Meath, showing the probable position and extent of ditches. Excavation has revealed the presence of banks associated with the ditches.

measuring approximately 255 by 192m (fig. 4.11).⁹² In the western sector of this large enclosure there is a multivallate enclosure consisting of three penannular banks and ditches. Cut into the innermost of these there is yet another ditched enclosure, in this case oval and measuring approximately 27 by 15m, possibly with an entrance in the south-eastern sector. On the opposite bank of the river, situated between the enclosure and Knowth, is Crewbane Marsh, an extensive wetland area.⁹³ Although work is at an early stage, a portion of a double-sided antler comb, a small copper-alloy strap, a fragment of an iron vessel and glass beads indicate that the site is of early medieval date. Unaccompanied burials have also been discovered that are in the process of being assessed.

It is clear that there are at least two phases of activity on this site since the small oval enclosure appears to be dug into the trivallate penannular enclosure. The trivallate enclosure may be the earliest feature on the site, possibly a native burial monument of the early medieval period. The outer large enclosing feature that cuts off the whole promontory may represent a later Viking construction

⁹² This plan is based on the geophysical survey undertaken by Kevin Barton, Mark Nolan and Igor Murin on behalf of the excavator Conor Brady. It is available online from the *Rossnaree Archaeological Project Blog*, rossnareedig.wordpress.com/. ⁹³ G. Stout, *Nemgrange and the bend of the Boyne* (Cork, 2002), pp 15–16 (map in preface and acknowledgments).

together with the small oval enclosure, which may have been a Viking citadel that used the ramparts of the earlier trivallate enclosure for additional protection.

If the Rossnaree enclosure is the *longphort* of Linn Rois, it has potential to reveal important insights on the interaction between the local Irish rulers and Vikings. Viking-style houses⁹⁴ and graves⁹⁵ have been found at Knowth, which must indicate a complex inter-relationship between Vikings and the kings of Knowth (Cianachta Breagh). Although the Viking presence on the Boyne posed an obvious threat to the kings of Knowth, which was plundered in 863,⁹⁶ there were potential benefits, too. Vikings could have been valuable allies in assisting the kings of Knowth in casting off the yoke of domination by their kinsmen, the Clann Cholmáin of Mide. In 848 Cináed, son of Conaing, king of Cianachta Breagh, rebelled against Máel Sechnaill I, allied with a strong force of Foreigners, and plundered Máel Sechnaill's kingdom of Mide. He also attacked Lagore, the royal crannog of Máel Sechnaill's ally Tigernach, the king of South Brega. In the following year Cináed was captured and drowned by Máel Sechnaill.⁹⁷

LINN DUACHAILL, ANNAGASSAN, CO. LOUTH

The search for the Viking fortress of Linn Duachaill was first pioneered by historians, Thomas Wright (in 1748)⁹⁸ and Revd Canon James B. Leslie (in 1908).⁹⁹ Building on the work of Wright and Leslie, during the period 2004–10 a research team comprising Mark Clinton, Micheál McKeown and myself, aided by Ruth Cassidy of Ember Films and Brian Walsh of the County Museum in Dundalk, sought to locate the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill.

Historical background

The early date of its foundation (841) and the wealth of historical information attaching to it combine to make the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill of considerable value to Viking scholarship. The archaeological discovery of the site in 2010 was therefore a matter of some importance. The fortification is located beside the small fishing village of Annagassan,¹⁰⁰ which is at the southern end of Dundalk

⁹⁴ P.F. Wallace, *The Viking-Age buildings of Dublin*, 2 pts (Dublin, 1992), i, pp 71–2; G. Eogan, 'Excavations at Knowth, Co. Meath, 1962–65', *PRIA*, 66C (1967–8), 299–400 at 359–63; G. Eogan, 'Report on the excavations of some passage graves, unprotected inhumation burials and a settlement site at Knowth, Co. Meath', *PRIA*, 74C (1974), 87–111. ⁹⁵ Eogan, 'Excavations at Knowth', 365–73; Eogan, 'Report on the excavations', 68–87. ⁹⁶ *AU*, s.a. 862. ⁹⁷ *AFM*, s.a. 848–9. For a fuller discussion of the Vikings and Knowth, see G. Eogan et al., *Excavations at Knowth, 5: The archaeology of Knowth in the first and second millennia AD* (Dublin, 2012). ⁹⁸ T. Wright, *Louthiana: or, An introduction to the antiquities of Ireland ...*, bk 1 (London, 1748), p. 4, pl. x. ⁹⁹ J.B. Leslie, *History of Kilsaran union of parishes in the county of Louth, being a history of the parishes of Kilsaran, Gernonstown, Stabannon, Manfieldstown and Dromiskin, with many particulars relating to the parishes of Richardstown, Dromin and Darver, comprising a large section of mid-Louth* (Dundalk, 1908), pp 90–9.

Bay at a crossing point below the confluence of the rivers Glyde and Dee. The pool where the rivers join has long been recognized locally as Linn Duachaill, 'the pool of Uachaill', a demon.¹⁰¹ St Colmán founded a monastery beside Linn Duachaill in the seventh century, which flourished until its destruction by Vikings, but there are no clear surviving remains of the monastery today. The annals record the establishment of a Viking *longphort* in 841 at Linn Duachaill, from which they launched attacks against the churches of the kingdom of Tethba, deep inland in the north midlands.¹⁰² In the following year the monastery's last abbot, Caemhan or Commán, was slain by Vikings and their Irish allies, and that same year Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, and Clogher, Co. Tyrone, were attacked by Vikings from Linn Duachaill.¹⁰³ The *longphort* was situated on the border between the kingdoms of Conaille Muirtheimne and Ard Cianachta.

The previous decade had already witnessed a certain amount of Viking activity in the district. There is an annalistic account of Vikings hunting small whales or dolphins off the east coast in 828.¹⁰⁴ In the same year the king of Ard Cianachta was killed by them and the monasteries of Dunleer and Clonmore were struck.¹⁰⁵ In 831 the kingdom of Conaille Muirtheimne in north Co. Louth was plundered and the king and his brother were carried off to the ships.¹⁰⁶ In 832 all of the churches of the neighbouring territory of Ard Cianachta were plundered,¹⁰⁷ while in the following year it was the turn of the monastery of Dromiskin, Co. Louth,¹⁰⁸ a fate shared by another at Dromin, also in Co. Louth, in 835.¹⁰⁹ Then in 841 Vikings established a *longphort* at Linn Duachaill from which, in the same year, they launched attacks (mentioned earlier) against churches of the kingdom of Tethba,¹¹⁰ and, in the following year, against the monasteries of Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, and Clogher, Co. Tyrone.¹¹¹

For a brief moment the fortunes of Viking Annagassan and Dublin ran in tandem with one another. In 851 a Viking faction known as the *Dubgennti* (the Dark Foreigners) attacked the *Finnngallaibh* (the Fair Foreigners) of Dublin and the *longphort* there was plundered with great slaughter.¹¹² The *Dubgennti* attempted a similar onslaught on Linn Duachaill that same year, but were repulsed with losses. In addition Vikings killed the son of the king of the neighbouring territory of Fir Rois.¹¹³ Rival Viking groups fought a naval battle at Carlingford in 852, in which the *Dubgennti* were the victors. Stain, a leader of the *Finnngallaibh*, escaped but his colleague Iercne was killed. The annals also record an attack on Armagh that year by the Foreigners of Linn (Duachaill?).¹¹⁴ Thereafter the *longphort* at Annagassan receives no further historical attention until early in the tenth century.

100 Annagassan = Áth na gCasán, 'ford of the paths'. 101 Leslie, *History of Kilsaran*, pp 89–90. 102 *AU*, s.a. 840. 103 *Ibid.*, s.a. 841. 104 *Ibid.*, s.a. 827. 105 *Ibid.* 106 *Ibid.*, s.a. 830. 107 *Ibid.*, s.a. 831. 108 *Ibid.*, s.a. 832. 109 *Ibid.*, s.a. 834. 110 *Ibid.*, s.a. 850. 111 *Ibid.*, s.a. 851. 112 *Ibid.*, s.a. 850. 113 *Ibid.* 114 *Ibid.*, s.a. 851.

In 926, under pressure from the Northern Uí Néill king Muirchertach mac Néill, the fleet of Loch Cuan (Strangford Lough) retired south and anchored at Linn Duachaill. Muirchertach pursued them by land and was met by a ground-force advancing north to meet him at Cluain na Cruimther.¹¹⁵ Victory went to the Irish and Hálfðanr, son of Gothfrith, king of Dublin, was among the fallen. The survivors were besieged for a week before being rescued by Gothfrith, who came from Dublin to relieve them. The following year the fleet of Linn Duachaill departed for England.¹¹⁶ There are no further historical references to Linn Duachaill.

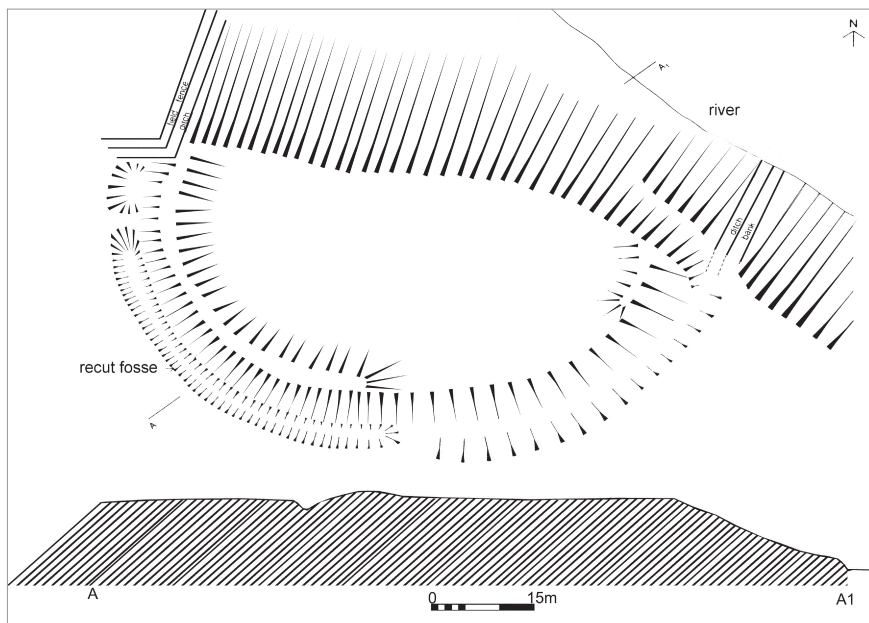
Despite the departure of the fleet, there is evidence indicating that a population of mixed Scandinavian and Irish descent remained living in the vicinity of Linn Duachaill. At nearby Greenmount a bronze sword-fitting of around 1100 was found that bears interlaced decoration on one face and a Norse runic inscription on the other.¹¹⁷ The inscription records the name of the owner of the sword as 'Domnall seal's head' and, though written in Norse runes, the name Domnall is Irish.¹¹⁸

The discovery of Linn Duachaill

Against this historical background, it was considered most likely that the *longphort* at Annagassan was located in the townland of Linns, which appeared to preserve one element of the former name Linn Duachaill. It was also thought likely that the site lay within the tidal area of the River Glyde, which extended as far as a weir at the northern end of the townland. The townland of Linns forms a ridge bounded along its eastern side by the sea and to the west and south by the Glyde and its confluence with the Dee. Marshy land that lay on the west bank of the Glyde has since been reclaimed, as was an extensive marsh to the north of Linns that is recorded on maps of seventeenth-century and later date.¹¹⁹

At Linns the highest elevation of the ridge is at the southern end above the confluence of the rivers. This is where a D-shaped earthwork known as Lis na Rann is located. A ditch between two banks encloses a raised area that measures 80 by 35m (fig. 4.12). According to the Sites and Monuments Record,¹²⁰ within Lis na Rann there was a circular hut site with an internal diameter of 4.2m, delimited by a slight bank 1m wide by 0.2m high. Adjacent to this were two banks suggesting the former existence of a larger, rectangular house. The interior of Lis na Rann appears to have been ploughed in recent years and no traces of these features remain.

¹¹⁵ Apparently near Newry, Co. Down. ¹¹⁶ Ibid., *s.a.* 926. ¹¹⁷ J.H. Lefroy, 'On a bronze object bearing a runic inscription found in Greenmount, Castle-Bellingham, Co. Louth', *JRSAI*, 11 (1870-1), 471-502. ¹¹⁸ G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Nordic names and loanwords in Ireland' in Larsen (ed.), *Vikings in Ireland*, p. 111. ¹¹⁹ P. Gosling, 'From Dún Delca to Dundalk: the topography and archaeology of a medieval frontier town, ADc.1187-1700', *JLAHS*, 22 (1991), 237-8. ¹²⁰ Sites and Monuments Record, NMS, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.



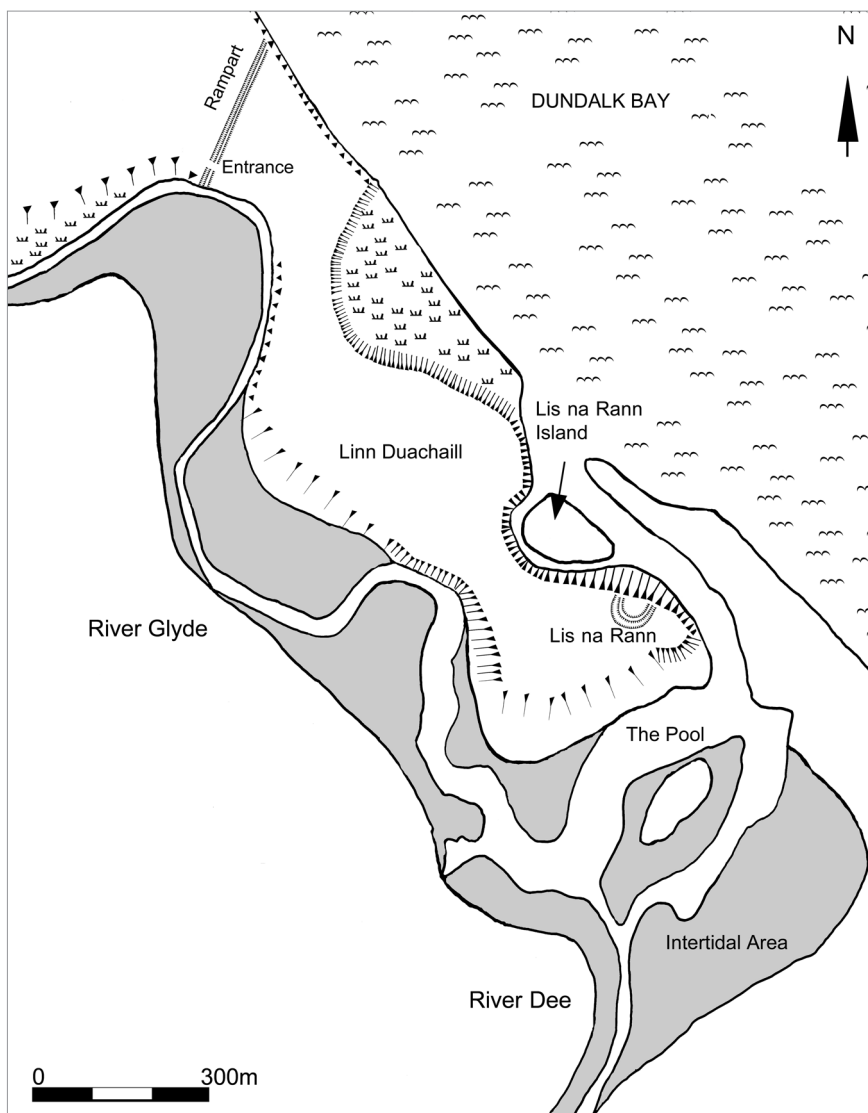
4.12 Plan of Lis na Rann, Co. Louth (after V.M. Buckley, *Archaeological inventory of County Louth* (Dublin, 1986)).

A hoard of twelve medieval English silver pennies was found on the riverbank below Lis na Rann in 1928. This hoard appears to date later than the primary use of the earthwork and may not be related to it in any way. It was apparently contained in a wooden vessel that ‘crumbled away when the earth was turned up with the spade’.¹²¹ The pennies were struck during the early fourteenth century in mints at Berwick, Canterbury, Chester, Durham and London. The hoard was probably buried *c.* 1330 and contains coins from the reigns of Edward I, II and III.

It is now believed that Lis na Rann was the citadel of the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill. The sides of the ridge there are quite precipitous and are generally steep elsewhere, which would have made it difficult to take boats out of the water for maintenance or protection (fig. 4.13). Even so, towards the northern end of the ridge the land falls from the north-north-east towards the River Glyde, producing a gentler gradient. Examination of the terrain suggests that this was where the Vikings had access to their boats and the outer fortification of the *longphort* must have protected this vital area.

Archaeological finds also seem to indicate the importance of this location. What may be a harpoon point associated with Viking activities¹²² was found in a

121 A. Mahr, ‘A hoard of coins found near Annagassan’, *JLAHS*, 7 (1929), 42–5. 122 Or, perhaps, part of an eel spear. But note the entry in the *Annals of Ulster* for 828 referring to the Vikings hunting marine mammals off the coast – presumably with harpoons.



4.13 Plan of the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill, Linns, Co. Louth, showing the rivers and the tidal flood plain (dark grey). The course of the rivers, as shown, is based on the Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet, surveyed prior to the nineteenth-century drainage operations.

ploughed field on the sloping ground. Here, two eighth- to ninth-century pieces of finely decorated Irish metalwork were also discovered. One is gilt, the other enamelled, and these probably derive from ecclesiastical objects.¹²³ It is possible

¹²³ M. McKeown, 'Annagassan: a study of the Viking *longphort*', *JLAHS*, 26 (2005), 72–3.

that they were associated with the former monastery of Linn Duachail, though considering the number of Irish monasteries that the Linn Duachail Vikings are recorded as having looted, it is quite likely that the finds represent ecclesiastical metalwork from elsewhere, taken by Vikings to Linn Duachail to be recycled. The same may apply to objects found in the Glyde at Linns during nineteenth-century dredging, including a bone or antler comb and a wooden bucket of Irish manufacture with decorative metal fittings,¹²⁴ of a type that has turned up in Viking graves in Norway. Objects that have not been located in the National Museum collections include a 'brass pot ... accompanied by a perforated strainer and ladle ... and an enamelled ornament or button'.¹²⁵ Large numbers of animal bones of sheep and cattle were also found in the river. In the River Dee, close to its confluence with the Glyde, a Viking axe and a cauldron chain were found along with other unspecified iron objects.

It is thought most likely that the monastery of Linn Duachail was sited on high ground towards the middle of the ridge at Linns. It was in this area that a hone stone of Viking type was picked up on the surface of ploughed land.¹²⁶ Human bones were also found in the area, including a fragmented rib shaft and a left patella. Initially it was thought probable that these remains derived from the monastic cemetery, but the remains appear to have been burnt;¹²⁷ accordingly they may derive either from a Viking cremated burial, such as that found at Knoxspark, or a disturbed prehistoric burial. Also recovered was a Viking silver ring with an oval setting, now empty, which is similar in form to one found in a Viking burial at Great Ship Street, Dublin, for which a radiocarbon date range of 665x865 (95% probability) was obtained.¹²⁸

Based on the assessment of the terrain and the distribution of stray finds, geophysical survey was undertaken by Target Archaeological Geophysics Ltd (pl. 1).¹²⁹ Survey was focused on the low-lying area that slopes to the bank of the Glyde and extending south for some distance. The results revealed what appeared to be a rampart running for perhaps 245m from the Glyde to the sea, cutting off a substantial area of the peninsula formed by the Glyde and the Dee and the sea. Intensive activity was contained by the rampart, which consists of a substantial ditch and an accompanying bank. Inside the rampart, densely grouped features suggested intensive burning and occupation, consistent with industrial activity and settlement.

¹²⁴ J. Raftery, 'A wooden bucket from Co. Louth', *JLAHS*, 13 (1956), 395–8. ¹²⁵ Lefroy, 'On a bronze object bearing a runic inscription', 494–5. ¹²⁶ McKeown, 'Annagassan', 67.

¹²⁷ O. O'Meara, 'Bioanthropological report on three bones discovered in Co. Louth' (unpublished report prepared for the NMI, 2012). ¹²⁸ L. Simpson, 'Viking Dublin: the ninth-century evidence begins to unfold – Temple Bar West, Ship Street Great and South Great George's Street' in E. Roesdahl and J.P. Schjødt (eds), *Beretning fra treogtyvende tværfaglige vikingesymposium* (Højbjerg, 2004), p. 54, fig. 7. ¹²⁹ J. Nicholls, 'Geophysical survey report, Linns td, Annagassan, Co. Louth' (unpublished report prepared for Annagassan and District Local Historical Society, 2007).

Excavation summary

Test excavation directed by Mark Clinton was carried out in September 2010 in three cuttings measuring 12 by 2m. Trench 1 was placed across the supposed rampart, while the other two cuttings sought to explore anomalies within the enclosure. In Trench 1 a large defensive ditch and the base of an associated internal bank were revealed that formed the anticipated outer rampart of the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill. The ditch had been recut four times and was sealed by a layer that contained thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pottery. Part of a strap-end was found in the top fill of the ditch, while cut timbers were located in the base of the primary ditch. The strap-end is of a type that has also been found in the ninth- to early tenth-century Viking cemetery at Islandbridge, Dublin.¹³⁰ Radiocarbon dating indicated a range of 680x890 for the primary ditch fill. The shaft of a copper-alloy ringed pin was found on a metalled surface outside the ditch. Two large fragments of tuyères recovered from the metalled surface provide evidence for furnaces close by, indicating that metalworking was being undertaken outside the enclosure as well.

Trenches 2 and 3 contained metalled surfaces, drains, pits and a post-hole. Two radiocarbon dates obtained for features in Trench 3 were in the range 680x880 and 690x940. Debris associated with metalworking was plentiful and animal bones and shells represented food remains. Among the animal species present were cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*), pig (*Sus sp.*), horse (*Equus caballus*), dog (*Canis familiaris*) and cat (*Felis catus*), with cattle dominating the assemblage overwhelmingly.¹³¹

Characteristic Viking ships' roves and rivets and an assortment of nails were found. Also present were two fragments of hacksilver in the form of pieces cut from a Viking armlet, as well as a waste fragment from the carving of a lignite bracelet. Other finds were a small dice-shaped lead weight, a tubular fishing weight and what may be the beam of weighing scales, an iron knife and a slotted and pronged implement of a type also found in the Viking cemetery at Kilmainham/Islandbridge, Dublin.¹³² A decorated boss and a binding strip may represent looted Irish ecclesiastical metalwork.

The diagnostic aspect of the assemblage makes it possible to state with confidence that the Viking *longphort* of Linn Duachaill has been discovered archaeologically. It is a large fortress measuring up to 1.18km from north to south, within which the earthwork of Lis na Rann may have served as a citadel. The geophysical survey that revealed the outer rampart also provided some insights into the use of this large fortification (pl. 1). Close to the river where the excavations were conducted, it was clear that there was intensive activity of an

130 J. Bøe, 'Norse antiquities in Ireland' in H. Shetelig (ed.), *Viking antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 (Oslo, 1940), figs 23, 43.

131 R. Sloane, 'Analysis of animal remains' (unpublished report compiled on behalf of the Linn Duachaill Research Group, 2011).

132 NMI, reg. no. Wk 38; Bøe, 'Norse antiquities', p. 54.

industrial nature. The excavation results suggest that some metalworking activity also took place outside the fortress. Large areas of the interior seem to have been relatively open, containing what may have been paddocks and gardens for livestock and crops. It is likely that the same pattern of activity existed at other large *longphort* sites, particularly at Dublin, which was founded in the same year.

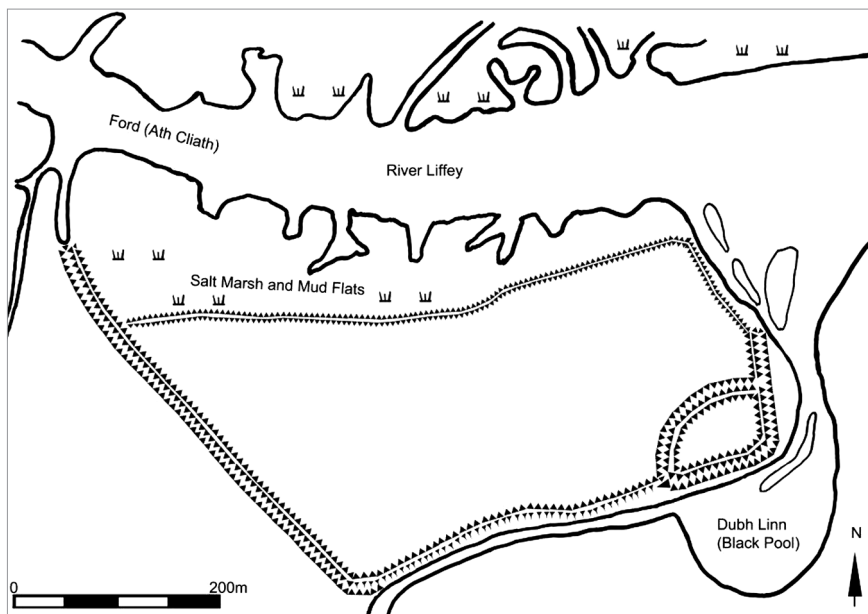
THE *LONGPHORT* OF DUBLIN

In keeping with Dublin's status as one of the earliest examples and arguably the most important Viking *longphort* in Ireland, the surrounding area has produced a large number of furnished Viking graves that are early in date.¹³³ Since the burials appear to be early, it is generally accepted that they are contemporary with the *longphort* of Dublin. Single graves and cemeteries have been found at College Green, Kildare Street, Bride Street, Cork Street, Kilmainham, Islandbridge, Phoenix Park and Palace Row, and the distribution of these burials around the ridge on which the medieval city of Dublin was situated¹³⁴ suggests that they are focused on that ridge. The burial distribution has been supplemented and confirmed by recent discoveries of other graves to the south-east of the ridge at Little Ship Street, South Great Georges Street¹³⁵ and Golden Lane.¹³⁶ Taken in conjunction with a critical assessment of the terrain on which the city of Dublin was built, this leads one to the conclusion that the medieval city developed on the site on which the *longphort* was founded.

The ridge on which Viking Dublin sits is bounded along the northern side by the River Liffey, with the River Poddle bounding it to the south and east. The two rivers converge at the eastern end of the ridge where, at the south-east corner, there is a pool from which the city takes the name Dublin (Dubhlinn, meaning 'black pool'). Overlooking the pool was likely the citadel of the *longphort*, on the site where Dublin Castle is now located (fig. 4.14).

As was the case with Linn Duachaill, the configuration of the rivers forms a ridge naturally protected by water on three sides, but which would have required defensive fortifications at the landward (western) end. The Poddle flows in from the south-west, forming a dogleg as it comes up against the ridge and turns sharply to run easterly towards the pool. As it skirts the southern edge of the ridge, the Poddle lies roughly parallel with the Liffey, running along the northern edge of the ridge. The point at which the Poddle forms a dogleg is the

¹³³ Harrison, 'Viking graves', pp 61–75. ¹³⁴ R. Ó Floinn, 'The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 133, fig. 5.1. ¹³⁵ L. Simpson, 'Viking warrior burials in Dublin: is this the *longphort*?' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 11–62. ¹³⁶ E. O'Donovan, 'The Irish, the Vikings and the English: new archaeological evidence from excavations at Golden Lane, Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VIII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium*



4.14 Proposed plan of the *longphort* of Dublin.

logical place for the Vikings to erect a rampart across the ridge to join the Liffey near where a tributary stream known as Colman's Brook flows into it. Once established, it appears that this line continued in use as the western rampart of Dublin, being refortified before and after the Anglo-Norman invasion. The line of the rampart is preserved roughly by modern Bridge Street, which runs down to the Liffey. Here, a modern bridge is located close to an ancient crossing place that is probably the ford that gives the city its alternative name, Baile Átha Cliath ('town of the hurdle ford').

The dating of the earliest settlement and defences of Viking Dublin is problematic and our understanding of the archaeology of the *longphort* phase is hampered by the absence of published stratigraphical accounts of several key sites. It remains the case that much of the early archaeology of Viking Dublin has yet to be described, catalogued or presented in published form, together with an integrated account of the structures and finds, linked to a programme of scientific dating. At a number of sites the earliest levels were not excavated, including an important site at Werburgh Street where the excavator acknowledged that 'early material could remain unexcavated on the site'.¹³⁷ The dating

2006 (Dublin, 2008), pp 36–130. ¹³⁷ A. Hayden, 'The excavation of pre-Norman defences and houses at Werburgh Street, Dublin: a summary' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin III: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2001* (Dublin, 2002), p. 67.

of the earliest features in Dublin appears to be bedevilled by the date 917, which is when the Viking leadership returned,¹³⁸ having been expelled by the combined forces of Leinster and Brega in 902.¹³⁹ Uncritical reliance on this date as the foundation of the Hiberno-Norse town, coupled with the belief that no earlier settlement existed on the ridge prior to that date, meant that primary Viking features dug into the boulder clay were assigned a tenth-century date when a ninth-century date is more probable.¹⁴⁰ Where scientific dating was undertaken at Parliament Street and Temple Bar West, it has been demonstrated that an enclosing embankment and associated houses date to earlier than 917.¹⁴¹ It is proposed here that the structures in question formed part of the *longphort* settlement.

What seems probable, but which remains to be demonstrated archaeologically, is a sequence whereby a rampart (or perhaps a palisade initially) was constructed across the western end of the ridge between the two rivers and that this was the primary fortification of the *longphort* of Dublin. A series of embankments were also constructed along the banks of the Liffey and the Poddle and these grew in scale over the years. The riverbank defences to some degree may also have functioned as flood defences.

The western rampart

The discovery of well-fortified *longphort* sites elsewhere supports the proposition that ninth-century houses found in a number of locations on the ridge of Dublin were protected within a large enclosure. Locating the earliest fortification on the western part of the ridge, thus defining the extent and allowing for scientific dating of the *longphort* settlement, is beset by the problem that excavation has been determined by random developmental factors rather than by archaeological research considerations. Nevertheless, a number of excavations have exposed defensive ramparts at the western end of the ridge and, although these are clearly pre-Anglo-Norman, there is little to date the features accurately. Linzi Simpson asserts that there is little evidence for the occupation of the western end of the ridge in the early Viking period and suggests that this area may not have formed part of the initial settlement.¹⁴² At Linn Duachaill, however, the interior of the site had extensive areas that did not contain habitation and it seems reasonable to assume that the same pattern occurred in the Dublin *longphort*, established in the same year.

A possible 'clay bank' deposit, 3m in depth, was found at the west end of High Street and these deposits were also found at Back Lane, where Tim

¹³⁸ AU, s.a. 916. ¹³⁹ Ibid., s.a. 901. ¹⁴⁰ For example, S. Geraghty, *Viking Dublin: botanical evidence from Fishamble Street* (Dublin, 1996), p. 18. ¹⁴¹ L. Simpson, *Director's findings: Temple Bar West* (Dublin, 1999), pp 14, 26; M. Gowen and G. Scally, *A summary report on excavations at Exchange Street, Dublin* (Dublin, 1996), p. 11. ¹⁴² L. Simpson, 'Forty years a-digging' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin I: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval*

Coughlan interpreted them as a two-phase bank standing at least 2m high.¹⁴³ A Viking comb was found in the lower deposits of the first-phase bank fill. The bank itself could not be dated securely,¹⁴⁴ but a tenth-century date for the comb seems most likely.¹⁴⁵ The bank was disturbed and seems to have been partly levelled,¹⁴⁶ with the result that it is not clear whether the comb relates to the bank construction or whether it is evidence for when the bank was partly levelled. It seems reasonable to deduce that the bank was constructed no later than the tenth century. Cultivated soil containing mid- to late twelfth-century pottery that built up against the eastern face of the first-phase bank provides a *terminus ante quem*. In the second phase the bank was raised. This activity was dated by pottery to the late twelfth century and is interpreted by Coughlan as consolidation of the earlier bank in the Anglo-Norman period.

The first phase of the bank is possibly associated with two parallel ditches found outside the medieval city wall at Cornmarket as well as farther north at Bridge Street.¹⁴⁷ These ditches were oriented north-south (parallel to the later city defences) and measured approximately 5–6m wide by 2.5m deep. The ditches pre-date the cutting of the great Anglo-Norman city fosse in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and, though of unknown date, clearly relate to the Viking-Age defences of the ridge. Coughlan also found the remains of what may have been a strong palisade inside the line of the earliest bank.¹⁴⁸ It was not possible to date this, though Simpson has since speculated that it represented the earliest defensive structure in this area of the ridge.¹⁴⁹

The western end of the ridge has therefore produced a series of banks, ditches and a possible palisade dating to the Viking Age at precisely the location where, on topographical grounds, one would have predicted the *longphort* defences to have been located. The lack of clear dating evidence makes it impossible to say whether any of the defensive structures excavated to date represent the primary *longphort* rampart. It seems highly probable that the site of the rampart across the ridge at this location established the line of fortifications of the western end of the ridge, which was then adhered to by later refortifications.

Fortification of the waterfronts

The full circuit of the riverbanks was also fortified during the Viking era and sections were investigated in a series of excavations carried out in Christchurch Place, Werburgh Street, Dublin Castle, Ross Road, Parliament Street, Temple Bar West, Fishamble Street and Winetavern Street. The excavations revealed

Dublin symposium 1999 (Dublin, 2000), p. 28. ¹⁴³ T. Coughlan, '105 Back Lane/Lamb Alley, Dublin', *Excavations 1997* (1998), 32; Simpson, 'Forty years a-digging', p. 27. ¹⁴⁴ Simpson, 'Forty years a-digging', p. 27. ¹⁴⁵ Ian Riddler and Nicola Trzaska-Nartowski, pers. comm. ¹⁴⁶ Andy Halpin, pers. comm. ¹⁴⁷ A. Hayden, 'West side story: archaeological excavations at Cornmarket and Bridge Street Upper, Dublin – a summary account' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin I*, p. 93. ¹⁴⁸ Coughlan, 'Back Lane/Lamb Alley', p. 32. ¹⁴⁹ Simpson,

three successive earthen banks and a stone wall dating to the Viking period. Enclosing banks found at 33–34 Parliament Street by Georgina Scally, along the west bank of the Poddle, have produced dating evidence. The sequence is as follows. Phase 1 constitutes the earliest riverfront activity on the west side of the Poddle and is mid-ninth to early tenth century in date. It consists of habitation that dates possibly prior to and certainly after the construction of an enclosing clay bank (Bank 1). This settlement is part of the *longphort* phase of Viking Dublin. In Phase 2 a bank of mid- to late tenth-century date was built closer to the Poddle, while a larger Phase 3 bank is late tenth to early eleventh century in date.¹⁵⁰ The earthworks in question flank the confluence of the rivers, which at this location would have been wide and deep, and an effective deterrent to land-borne attack. Perhaps for this reason it was not initially considered necessary to erect stout defences along this section of waterfront or along the Liffey. The River Poddle, as it flowed eastwards along the south side of the ridge to the pool, may have proved less of a deterrent to land-borne attack and here the embankments are more substantial. Moreover, they are situated on higher ground where their use as flood defences would have been redundant.¹⁵¹

A defensive bank was exposed overlooking the Poddle at Werburgh Street, where it pre-dated a house that produced a dendrochronological date of 924±9.¹⁵² In the excavator's opinion the bank 'considerably pre-dates' the house. Influenced by Claire Walsh's findings on an adjacent site, Alan Hayden suggested a late ninth- to early tenth-century date,¹⁵³ and argued that the bank is the same as the earliest of a series of banks found at nearby Ross Road, again overlooking the Poddle. Based on radiocarbon dating of fence posts, Walsh states that the earliest bank at Ross Road is from the early tenth century. She does not demonstrate the precise relationship of the fence to the bank, which may be earlier than the fence posts. A fragment of a glass bangle from the earliest level at Ross Road has a typological date range of late seventh to ninth century, but this find could not be used to date any of the defensive embankments.¹⁵⁴ Walsh refers to excavations conducted in an adjacent cutting in Christchurch Place, where an earlier bank was found at a further remove from the Poddle following the same alignment as her rampart.¹⁵⁵ She asserts that the Ross Road embankments are paralleled not only along the Poddle at Parliament Street (discussed earlier), but also along the Liffey at Fishamble Street. Patrick Wallace proposes a tenth-century date for the earliest of the Fishamble Street banks,¹⁵⁶ but in the absence of scientific dating this proposal is based largely on the belief that there

'Forty years a-digging', p. 28. ¹⁵⁰ Gowen and Scally, *Summary report on excavations at Exchange Street*, p. 11. ¹⁵¹ C. Walsh, 'Dublin's southern town defences, tenth to fourteenth centuries: the evidence from Ross Road' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2000* (Dublin, 2001), p. 98. ¹⁵² A. Hayden, 'Excavation of pre-Norman defences', p. 47. ¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 66. ¹⁵⁴ Walsh, 'Dublin's southern town defences', p. 96. ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94. ¹⁵⁶ P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeological

is no settlement present that dates earlier than 917. Wallace also deduces that 'this first Viking embankment seems to have encircled the whole town'.¹⁵⁷ If that is the case, and if the section running along Parliament Street is ninth century in date, it is probable that the other sections discussed are of the same age.

Habitation

A previously unidentified phase of settlement at Dublin in the mid- to late ninth century was documented by Linzi Simpson.¹⁵⁸ At Temple Bar West three ninth-century sunken houses were found dug into the boulder clay on the bank of the River Liffey, just above the high-water mark. Also found was a metalled yard complete with cooking area.¹⁵⁹ The grave of a small child was close by and the complex dated to 'between the late eighth and late ninth century'.¹⁶⁰ Dug into the natural bedrock, the chambers of these buildings were small and rectangular with average dimensions of 2.25 by 3m. They had wattle walls with the roof supported by an arrangement of internal vertical posts usually located at either end of the structure.¹⁶¹ Elsewhere in Dublin, similar sunken-floored houses were identified at Winetavern Street and Christchurch Place,¹⁶² and at Fishamble Street.¹⁶³ None of these houses was dated, but like the Temple Bar West houses they were dug into the boulder clay and a ninth-century date is probable for them. A house of similar type, radiocarbon dated to the ninth century, was excavated at Truska, Co. Galway.¹⁶⁴ The Truska house had an associated burial containing two young males, and associated burials were also found in proximity to the sunken houses at Temple Bar West and Fishamble Street.

Significantly, a number of houses of Wallace's Type 1 were also found at Temple Bar West and dated to the ninth century. The Temple Bar West excavations revealed that there was a densely occupied area fronting on to the Poddle, which was divided into property plots and contained post-and-wattle Type 1 houses. A similar house at Exchange Street Upper was radiocarbon dated to between 690 and 888 and this house could be associated directly with banks along both the Poddle and the Liffey. These houses are identical to ones at Fishamble Street and Wood Quay, which are regarded as being of tenth-century date.¹⁶⁵ An associated industrial area where ore was smelted was also found, as were animal pens.¹⁶⁶

It may be that the sunken houses represent the dwellings of the warriors who first settled the *longphort* of Dublin. As the site developed, houses of Type 1 were

identity of the Hiberno-Norse town', *JRSAL*, 122 (1992), 36. ¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 45. ¹⁵⁸ L. Simpson, 'Pre-Viking and early Viking Dublin: research questions' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin X: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2008* (Dublin, 2010), pp 84–8. ¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 84. ¹⁶⁰ Simpson, 'Viking Dublin: the ninth century evidence begins to unfold', p. 50. ¹⁶¹ Simpson, *Director's findings*, pp 13–16. ¹⁶² H. Murray, *Viking and early medieval buildings in Dublin* (Oxford, 1983), pp 15–16. ¹⁶³ Wallace, *Viking-Age buildings*, i, p. 17. ¹⁶⁴ Gibbons and Kelly, 'Viking-Age farmstead', 28–32; Kelly, 'Vikings in Connemara', p. 179. ¹⁶⁵ Simpson, 'Research questions', p. 85. ¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp 86–7.

built to accommodate the families of the warriors, craftsmen and traders of the *longphort*. According to Simpson, 'the evidence to date, then, suggests that the Viking-Age base or *longphort* of Dublin was an organized settlement, that was formally laid out in the interior by the late ninth century at least. The buildings that housed the warriors and their families, the craftsmen and traders, were identical to the houses of the later Hiberno-Norse town and were arranged within defined property plots and continued in use right up to the twelfth century'.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, 'there was no break in the occupancy of the site in AD902, when the Vikings were reputedly expelled from Dublin. The settlement apparently continued on, albeit perhaps without the ruling élite, suggesting that a hard-and-fast distinction between the levels of the ninth and early tenth century is artificial in Dublin'.¹⁶⁸

The evidence shows that the roots of urbanism in Ireland are not to be found in the return from England of a semi-urbanized group of Vikings who founded a town at Dublin in 917.¹⁶⁹ Rather, Dublin developed continuously from the establishment of a *longphort* in 841. It is thus in the foundation of the earliest *longphuirt* that the origin of urbanization in Ireland is to be found.

The citadel of the longphort of Dublin

There can be little doubt that the citadel of the *longphort* of Dublin was located on high ground overlooking the pool where Dublin Castle now sits. Dublin Castle was erected in the early thirteenth century, but it was preceded on the same site by a smaller fortress.¹⁷⁰ We may also deduce that the citadel of the *longphort* of Dublin was smaller than the present castle. Excavations at Dublin Castle have been around the edge of the thirteenth-century structure, with no excavations taking place within the castle.¹⁷¹ Excavations at the south-west tower (the Bermingham Tower) and the north-east tower (the Powder Tower) revealed a stone-faced bank with a ditch outside it along the River Poddle.¹⁷² This was not dated, but is of Viking construction and formed part of the defensive line along the Poddle.

Based on findings from other sites, it is likely that the citadel was protected by a strong rampart consisting of a curved ditch flanked by banks surmounted by wooden palisades. The relationship of Dublin Castle (and by extension the earlier citadel of the *longphort* of Dublin) to the Black Pool is remarkably similar to that of the siting of Lis na Rann with regard to the pool of Linn Duachaill.

Activities around the Black Pool

As noted in connection with most of the sites discussed earlier, the presence of a pool in which to anchor vessels is a recurrent feature associated with Irish

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 86. ¹⁶⁸ Ibid. ¹⁶⁹ Wallace, 'Archaeological identity of the Hiberno-Norse town', 36. ¹⁷⁰ A. Lynch and C. Manning, 'Excavations at Dublin Castle, 1985-7' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II*, p. 174. ¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 173, fig. 3. ¹⁷² Ibid., p. 182.

longphuirt. The name Linn, meaning 'a pool', is incorporated into the names of a number of *longphort* sites recorded in the annals, including Dubhlinn, Linn Duachaill, Linn Rois and Linn Sailech.¹⁷³

In Dublin, furnished graves and settlement evidence were found around an inlet of the pool along its southern edge. Here, in addition to the graves, ninth-century gullies, post-holes, hearths and many animal bones were discovered. Along the eastern side of the inlet there was also some form of palisade, which was succeeded by a defensive earthen bank.¹⁷⁴ It seems that ships were docking on this side of the pool and that it was part of the port of the *longphort*. Although this area may have been protected by ramparts and palisades, the main defensive fortification was located on the ridge to the north and west of the pool.

It may be the case that similar activities took place around the pool of Linn Duachaill and that there is settlement to be found on the bank opposite the *longphort*. The discovery of a cauldron chain and a Viking axe in the River Dee close to its junction with the pool would be consistent with such an interpretation, since the objects may have been lost from vessels docking on the riverbank opposite the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill.

CONCLUSION

A review of the available evidence indicates a number of common factors that link Viking *longphort* sites in Ireland. These include the presence of a large D-shaped enclosure on the shore of a river or lake, or the fortification of a promontory partly surrounded by water. There may be a further inner enclosure serving as a strongpoint or citadel. Other features are the use of natural features such as marshy ground and tributary rivers to maximize security and the proximity of a pool. They are strategically located, often on the boundary between Irish kingdoms so as to exploit native rivalries and maximize trading and raiding opportunities, and with a view to controlling of important land and water routes. They may be situated near shallows (fords) where portage of vessels is necessary. Other traits are associated burials and finds indicating the presence of ships and of metalworking, trading and raiding activities.

The evidence so far seems to show that *longphort* sites were used both for trading purposes and as bases from which to launch attacks on neighbouring territories. The Dublin material seems to suggest that the roots of urbanism in early medieval Ireland lie in the establishment of *longphuirt*. Indeed the traditional distinction between *longphort* and town may be an entirely artificial one. Plans of Hiberno-Norse towns published by Wallace suggest that Cork,

¹⁷³ E. Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae; an index, with identifications, to the Gaelic names of places and tribes* (Dublin, 1910), pp 490–1. ¹⁷⁴ Simpson,

Limerick, Waterford and Wexford all exhibit similar locational factors to those noted above in relation to *longphort* sites. All appear to be large enclosures that take advantage of their location at the confluence of rivers and their tributaries.¹⁷⁵ There is fertile ground for future research to examine why it was that Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford continued to develop as urban centres, when sites such as Annagassan, Knoxspark and Woodstown did not.¹⁷⁶

‘Viking warrior burials in Dublin’, p. 56. ¹⁷⁵ Wallace, ‘Archaeological identity of the Hiberno-Norse town’, 38, fig. 1. ¹⁷⁶ All of the figure drawings were prepared by Vivienne Burbidge, to whom thanks are due.

Viking camps and the means of exchange in Britain and Ireland in the ninth century

GARETH WILLIAMS

One of the distinctive features of Viking activity in the mid- to late ninth century was the use of fortified camps (whether short-term or long-term) as bases for raiding and/or trading in the surrounding regions. In Ireland, such camps were known as *longphuirt* (singular *longphort*) and are first recorded in 840 when a *longphort* of uncertain duration was recorded on Lough Neagh, and in 841 when Vikings overwintered at Duiblinn (Dublin) and Linn Duachail (Annagassan, Co. Louth).¹ As Viking *longphuirt* are recorded as late as 930, before the transition to what are generally labelled ‘towns’ (typically referred to in the annals as a *dún*),² the focus of this essay on the ninth century may seem arbitrary from an Irish perspective, especially given that recent scholarship indicates that the significance of the ‘expulsion’ of the Vikings from Dublin in 902 has been overstated, and that the transition in Dublin from *longphort* to town was more seamless than was previously recognized.³ Nevertheless, a transition (if a small one) is apparently observable in the means of exchange in the tenth century in Viking Ireland, while in England the historically recorded counterparts of the *longphort* are almost exclusively a late ninth-century phenomenon, with a widespread shift to more permanent settlements, though these had a partially military character.⁴ In addition, England also saw a much larger and more complicated shift in the nature of exchange with the introduction of large-scale Anglo-Scandinavian coinages in the 890s,⁵ with the result that any useful comparison between England and Ireland beyond this point would require a rather longer treatment.

1 *AU*, s.a. 841; *AFM*, s.a. 839; R. Ó Floinn, ‘The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland’ in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 162; J. Maas, ‘*Longphort*, *dún* and *dúnad* in the Irish annals of the Viking period’, *Peritia*, 20 (2008), 267–70. 2 Maas, ‘*Longphort*, *dún* and *dúnad*’, 271–2, 274–5. 3 L. Simpson, ‘The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: archaeological evidence from Dublin’ in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 418–29. 4 G. Williams, ‘Military and non-military functions of the Anglo-Saxon *burh*, c.878–978’ in J. Baker et al. (eds), *Landscapes of defence in the Viking Age: Anglo-Saxon England and comparative perspectives* (Turnhout, 2013), pp 129–64; G. Williams, ‘Towns and identities in Viking England’ in D.M. Hadley and L. Ten Harkel (eds), *Everyday life in Viking towns: social approaches to Viking-Age towns in Ireland and England, c.850–1100* (Oxford, 2013), pp 14–34. 5 M.A.S. Blackburn, ‘Currency under the

Longphuirt were of variable duration. The one at Dublin remained more or less permanently occupied and evolved into a town in the tenth century, but we know this only with hindsight and it is far from certain that this was intended from the outset. Sparser historical references suggest that Linn Duachaill was perhaps occupied only intermittently and as yet the archaeological evidence does not suggest otherwise, although the limited scale of excavation on the site to date means that this evidence is not in any way conclusive.⁶ A reference in the Annals of Ulster to the capture in 866 of 'flocks and herds' associated with *longphuirt* in Cenél nEógain and Dál nAraide has been taken to indicate a permanent settlement, although this is an isolated reference.⁷ Nevertheless, the presence of cattle and even of associated territory need not indicate anything more than a temporary presence (see below). Other *longphuirt* might be occupied for a season, or for a shorter campaign, with one at Emly, Co. Tipperary, supposedly being established for a mere two days.⁸

Short-lived Viking campaign camps had probably existed in Ireland before the first documented use of the term *longphort*, but the shift to overwintering in 841 is paralleled by the first recorded overwintering in the Frankish kingdom and England around the same time. The word derives from two loanwords from Latin, [*navis*] *longa*, meaning '[war]ship', and *portus*, which has a primary meaning of 'harbour', but is also used in the Viking Age as the Latin equivalent of Anglo-Saxon *burh*, a term that signifies both 'town' and 'fortification'.⁹ *Longphort* might therefore plausibly signify 'ship-harbour', 'ship-fort', 'ship-camp' or 'ship-trading centre'. The contexts in which the term is used in the annals suggest that the military function was what normally attracted the annalists' attention and a number of potential *longphort* sites have been identified, including Dunrally, Co. Laois; Fairyhill near Athlunkard, Co. Clare; Ballaghkeeran Little, Co. Westmeath; Rathmore near Castlemaine, Co. Kerry; Knoxspark, Co. Sligo; Athlumney, Co. Meath; Kellysgrove, Co. Galway; Dún Dubchomair, Co. Meath; Annagassan (Linn Duachaill), Co. Louth; Woodstown, Co. Waterford, and what appear to be elements of the *longphort* phase of Dublin.¹⁰ Some of these can be identified with *longphuirt* recorded in historical

Vikings, pt 2: The two Scandinavian kingdoms of the Danelaw, c.895–954', *BNJ*, 76 (2006), 204–26. ⁶ See the more detailed discussion by Eamonn Kelly in this volume. ⁷ *AU*, s.a. 866; Maas, 'Longphort, dún and dúnad', 270; J. Sheehan, 'The longphort in Viking-Age Ireland', *Acta Archaeologica*, 79 (2008), 283. ⁸ *AI*, s.a. 968; Ó Floinn, 'Early Viking Age in Ireland', p. 161. ⁹ C. Doherty, 'The Vikings in Ireland: a review' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, p. 324; M. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), pp 38–9; S. Draper, 'The significance of Old English *burh* in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15 (2008), 240–54; B. Yorke, 'West Saxon fortifications in the ninth century: the perspective from the written sources' in Baker et al. (eds), *Landscapes of defence*, pp 91–110. ¹⁰ E.P. Kelly, 'Recent investigations at Navan', *Riocht na Midhe*, 7:2 (1982–3), 76–85; E.P. Kelly, 'Investigation of ancient fords on the River Suck', *Inland Waterways News*, 20:1 (1993), 4–5; E.P. Kelly, 'Re-evaluation of a supposed

sources, while others have been identified on the basis of topography and/or finds. As discussed in more detail elsewhere in this volume by Eamonn Kelly, these sites are typically defensive enclosures built adjacent to navigable rivers and making use of earthen ramparts and ditches as well as natural features such as marshland.¹¹

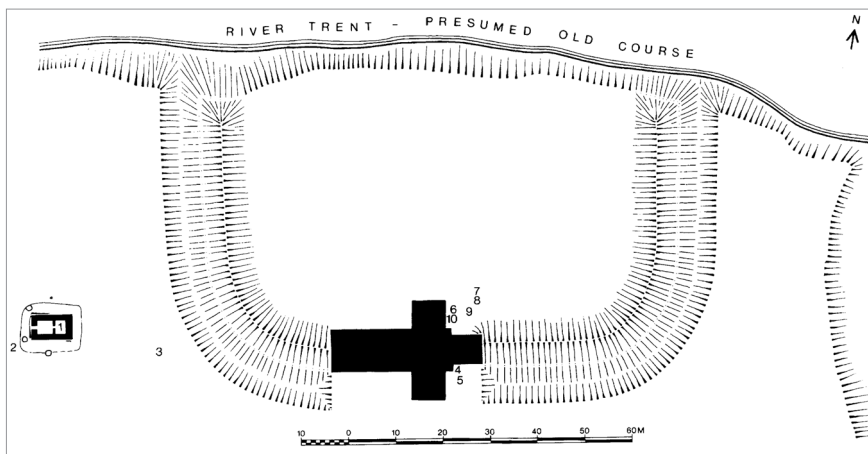
Nevertheless, discoveries at one of these sites, Woodstown near Waterford, have prompted a number of scholars, while not denying the military role of *longphuirt*, to consider that a greater emphasis should also be placed on the economic role of such sites.¹² Woodstown, excavated in 2003–4 in advance of a planned road-building scheme, has been investigated more comprehensively than other suggested *longphort* sites, although the circumstances of the discovery meant that fieldwork on the site was carried out under less than ideal conditions.¹³ The Woodstown finds include a large assemblage of over two hundred weights, normally associated with urban or pre-urban exchange and unparalleled in Ireland apart from the slightly later assemblage of weights from Dublin.¹⁴ Such a large assemblage has hitherto also been unparalleled in England, though comparable material is now recorded from two Viking ‘camp’ sites in England (see below). The site has also yielded a number of pieces of hacksilver that are discussed in more detail by John Sheehan elsewhere in this volume. As yet, only limited excavation has been carried out at Linn Duachaill, but this has yielded two pieces of hacksilver in addition to evidence of large-scale

inland promontory fort: Knoxspark, Co. Sligo – Iron Age fortress or Viking stronghold’ in G. Cooney et al. (eds), *Relics of old decency: archaeological studies in later prehistory. Festschrift for Barry Raftery* (Bray, 2009), pp 485–97; T. Fanning, ‘Ballaghkeeran Little, Athlone, Co. Westmeath’, *Medieval Archaeology*, 27 (1983), 221; E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, ‘Vikings on the Barrow: Dunrally fort, a possible Viking *longphort* in County Laois’, *Archaeology Ireland*, 9:3 (1995), 30–2; E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, ‘The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois’ in P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), pp 123–59; E.P. Kelly and E. O’Donovan, ‘A Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard, Co. Clare’, *Archaeology Ireland*, 12:4 (1998), 13–16; M. Clinton, ‘Settlement dynamics in Co. Meath: the kingdom of Loegaire’, *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 372–405; M. Gibbons, ‘The *longphort* phenomenon in Early Christian and Viking Ireland’, *History Ireland*, 12:3 (2004), 19–23; M. Gibbons, ‘Athlunkard (Ath-an-longphort): a re-assessment of the proposed Viking fortress in Fairyhill, County Clare’, *The Other Clare*, 29 (2005), 22–5; M. McKeown, ‘Annagassan, a study of a Viking *longphort*’, *JLAHS*, 26 (2005), 67–79; R. O’Brien et al., ‘Preliminary report on the archaeological excavation and finds retrieval strategy of the Hiberno-Scandinavian site of Woodstown 6, County Waterford’, *Decies*, 61 (2006), 13–107; I.R. Russell et al., ‘Woodstown 6. Supplementary research project’ (Drogheda, 2007). ¹¹ See also Kelly, ‘Knoxspark’, pp 486–8; Kelly and Maas, ‘Vikings and the kingdom of Laois’; Sheehan, ‘The *longphort*’, 283–6. ¹² Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, pp 47–56; Sheehan, ‘The *longphort*’; S. Harrison, ‘Beyond *longphuirt*? Life and death in early Viking-Age Ireland’ in Hadley and Ten Harkel (eds), *Everyday life in Viking towns*, pp 61–72; I. Russell and M.F. Hurley (eds), *Woodstown: a Viking-Age settlement in Co. Waterford* (Dublin, 2014). ¹³ Russell et al., ‘Woodstown 6’, pp 3, 11–14. ¹⁴ P.F. Wallace, ‘Weights and weight systems in Viking-Age Ireland’ in A. Reynolds and L. Webster (eds), *Early medieval art and archaeology in the northern world: studies in honour of James Graham-Campbell* (Leiden, 2013),

defences, reflecting an economic role at that site as well.¹⁵ Two conical weights were found in close proximity to the suggested *longphort* site at Fairyhill,¹⁶ while a piece of hacksilver, a lead weight and a dirham fragment from different locations in Co. Sligo have all been tentatively linked by Eamonn Kelly with activity at Knoxspark.¹⁷ John Sheehan has drawn attention to the possible association of early Viking hoards in Ireland with *longphuirt*, although he warns against the automatic assumption that hoards of 'Viking' character were necessarily buried by Vikings.¹⁸ Recent years have seen the discovery of evidence of the *longphort* phase that preceded the tenth-century town at Dublin and there, too, ninth-century weights provide evidence of economic activity in addition to the late ninth-century weights and balances recovered from Kilmainham/Islandbridge in the nineteenth century.¹⁹

In England, overwintering began in 850 with a camp on the Isle of Thanet. Like Dublin and Linn Duachail, this probably involved taking over a monastic site that, as an estate centre, had an existing infrastructure to supply the inhabitants, but was also at least a local focus for pre-urban trade and this may represent a wider trend with such camps, both for economic and logistical reasons.²⁰ From occasional overwintering, England saw an escalation in both the frequency and the scale of raiding in the mid-ninth century. In 865 a *micel here* ('great raiding band') arrived in East Anglia, remaining in England continuously for several years, selecting a new winter camp each year as a base to rest and resupply before launching fresh campaigns each spring. This strategy led to the conquest of the kingdoms of East Anglia and Northumbria, and a substantial part of the kingdom of Mercia, while a fourth kingdom, Wessex, came close to collapse, not least because in seizing the royal estate at Chippenham as their winter camp for 877–8 the *micel here* came close to capturing Alfred, at this point apparently the only surviving adult male member of the West Saxon royal house. Although it has been suggested that contemporary accounts of the size of the *micel here* were massively exaggerated, this was in part based on a false analogy with the use of the term *here* in the law code attributed to Ine of Wessex (688–726).²¹ This minimalist view has now largely been rejected on historical

pp 301–16. 15 Kelly, this volume. 16 Kelly and O'Donovan, 'Viking *longphort*', 14. 17 Kelly, 'Re-evaluation of a supposed inland promontory fort', p. 492. 18 Sheehan, 'The *longphort*', 290–2 and in this volume. 19 Simpson, 'First phase', p. 426; Wallace, 'Weights and weight systems', pp 307–8; Ó Floinn, 'Archaeology of the early Viking Age', p. 143. 20 Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, pp 49–52; Ó Floinn, 'Archaeology of the early Viking Age', pp 163–4; G. Williams, 'Raiding and warfare' in S. Brink and N. Price (eds), *The Viking world* (London, 2008), p. 198. An interesting dimension to the *longphort* discussion that has not yet, to the best of my knowledge, been explored in detail is the presence in England of a number of places with versions of the name Langport. These seem to appear around the same time as the *longphort* phenomenon in Ireland and typically seem to be sites with a market function, one of which (Langport in Somerset) developed into a *burh* (with combined military, economic and administrative functions) under Alfred of Wessex and his successors. I am grateful to Dr Jayne Carroll for drawing this to my attention. 21 P.H. Sawyer, *The age of the*



5.1 The enclosure at Repton, as interpreted by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle.

grounds, but the size of Viking camps discovered and investigated archaeologically in recent years suggests that warfare took place on a rather larger scale (see below). Alfred's near escape famously turned to victory in the face of adversity at the Battle of Edington in 878, but raiding resumed in 892 with several more years of raiding interspersed with winter camps. The general locations of many of the camps of both the 860s to 870s and the 890s are recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but relatively few of these have been investigated archeologically and some sites that have previously been suggested can now be shown to have been misidentified.²²

One such camp was located and partially excavated at Repton in Derbyshire, where the *micel here* overwintered in 873–4. Until recently, this has been the only Viking camp in England to be investigated in any detail and thus the interpretation of Repton by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle set the paradigm for what such camps were like. Another pre-existing monastery, the monastic church was incorporated into the defences of a D-shaped enclosure of 1.46 hectares (3.65 acres), protected by a bank and ditch (fig. 5.1). As a riverine D-shaped enclosure, Repton thus has parallels with several of the Irish sites.²³ Warrior graves add to the military character of the site, which also featured an

Vikings (London, 1962); N. Brooks, 'England in the crucible of defeat', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 29 (1979), 1–20; R. Abels, 'Alfred the Great, the *micel hæden here* and the Viking threat' in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: papers from the eleventh-century conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), pp 265–80. ²² J. Graham-Campbell, 'The archaeology of the "great army" (865–79)' in E. Roesdahl and J.P. Schjødt (eds), *Beretning fra treogtyvende tværfaglige vikingesymposium* (Højbjerg, 2004), pp 30–46; B. Raffield, 'Antiquarians, archaeologists and Viking fortifications', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, 20 (2013), 1–29. ²³ Kelly and O'Donovan, 'Viking *longphort*', 15–16; Sheehan, 'The *longphort*', 283–6; Kelly, 'Re-evaluation of a supposed inland

unfurnished mass grave, though opinion is divided as to whether this represents members of the *micel here* or monks. Excavated in the 1970s, without recourse to metal detectors and with the constraints of excavating on a site that is still partly an active churchyard and partly covered by the later Repton School, it yielded relatively few small finds to suggest the combination of military and economic activity recently suggested for the *longphuirt*.²⁴ Coins of the 870s have been recovered from two of the graves, but in themselves these could just as well represent the result of raiding as economic activity.²⁵

Both the size and the character of the Repton enclosure contrast with two sites that have been identified more recently, primarily through metal detecting. Torksey in Lincolnshire is documented as the site of the winter camp of the *micel here* in 872–3, just before the army moved on to Repton. One might therefore expect strong similarities between the two camps, but the different style of investigation has yielded very different results. The Torksey site has been investigated by both legal and illegal metal detectorists at least since the early 1990s and has produced a vast quantity of metal finds. Unfortunately, many of these have been dispersed through trade without being recorded, but a large number of finds have been reported and recorded, primarily either through the Portable Antiquities Scheme or via the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, which has also acquired a significant assemblage of finds from the site. Torksey, like Repton, is on the River Trent, but the distribution of finds suggests a total size of about 55 hectares (137½ acres) and the published finds from the site include, among other things, coins, weights, hacksilver and gold. Recording of finds from the site is ongoing, but Mark Blackburn's 2011 publication included twenty-one single finds of Anglo-Saxon silver pennies of the ninth century, a hoard of six Anglo-Saxon coins of the same period and a lead trial piece for forgeries of the same type; over eighty Northumbrian copper-alloy stycas; three genuine Carolingian coins and two contemporary forgeries, together with another lead trial piece; ninety-three dirham fragments; forty-nine pieces of silver, including hacksilver and casting waste; thirteen pieces of hackgold; fifty-nine cubo-octahedral weights, three oblate spheroid weights, one lead steelyard weight and over a hundred 'classic' lead weights including several with decorative insets, and around 350 lead objects not classified in detail and interpreted as either weights or gaming pieces; together with a knife, a spearhead and an arrowhead of early medieval date and a variety of objects not related directly to either warfare or exchange in the Viking period.²⁶ As yet, no defences

promontory fort', pp 486–8. 24 M. Biddle and B. Kjolbye-Biddle, 'Repton and the "great heathen army", 873–4' in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw: select papers from the proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, 21–30 August 1997* (Oxford, 2001), pp 45–96. 25 M. Biddle et al., 'Coins of the Anglo-Saxon period from Repton, Derbyshire' in M. Blackburn (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon monetary history: essays in memory of Michael Dolley* (Leicester, 1986), pp 111–32. 26 M. Blackburn, 'Finds from the Anglo-Scandinavian site of Torksey, Lincolnshire' in B. Paszkiewicz (ed.), *Moneta mediævalis: studia numizmatyczne i*

have been located, and it seems likely that the site relied on natural defences of river and marshy land. A research project has recently been established to investigate the site more systematically, including geophysical and topographical surveys, and an attempt to record accurately all the known finds.²⁷

A comparable site, also apparently with its main period of activity in the 870s but slightly later than either Torksey or Repton, has been identified in north Yorkshire. To protect the site from illegal metal detecting, the precise location of the site remains confidential and having been known at one stage by the fictitious name of Ainsbrook the site is now in the process of publication under the name 'A riverine site in north Yorkshire', or ARSNY for short. The site was discovered by metal detectorists and, although not all of the finds have been reported, a large group were recorded by the British Museum and the York Archaeological Trust, and an investigation of the site, including surveys and limited excavation, was carried out by the latter. As the working name for the site suggests, it is located on a navigable river and a large sub-rectangular enclosure of probable early medieval date has been identified, with a total size of around 31 hectares (76 acres). Recorded finds from the site are varied, including weapons, but also a hoard of ninth-century coins and hacksilver; two single finds of ninth-century silver pennies; ninety Northumbrian stycas; fourteen dirham fragments; up to 283 weights (including twenty-four cubo-octahedral weights and several with decorative insets of Insular metalwork, coins or, in one case, part of another cubo-octahedral weight); a fragmentary balance; sixty-nine single finds of silver including hacksilver, an ingot and metalworking waste; and two pieces of hackgold, as well as other items not relating to exchange or warfare in the Viking period (pl. 2).²⁸ Although the relative proportions vary, the character of the finds is very similar to that of those from Torksey, with the combination of coins suggesting a core period of activity very shortly after the documented occupation of Torksey and Repton. The similarities in the find material from ARSNY and Torksey suggest that these sites may give a more representative picture of Viking camps than Repton, especially given that there are also similarities with the Woodstown assemblage and given the argument that trade may have been a normal part of activities at such sites. Finds associated with exchange have also been found in proximity to other documented camps in England, including

historycne ofiaowane Profesorowi Stanisławowi Sochodolskiemu w 65. rocznicę urodzin (Warsaw, 2002), pp 89–101; M. Blackburn, 'The Viking winter camp at Torksey, 872–3' in M. Blackburn, *Viking coinage and currency in the British Isles* (London, 2011), pp 221–64. 27 The Viking camp and Anglo-Saxon *burh* of Torksey are the subject of a collaborative research project by the Universities of York and Sheffield, together with the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Details can be found at www.york.ac.uk/archaeology/research/current-projects/torksey/, and a preliminary publication is provided in D. Hadley and J.D. Richards, 'Viking Torksey: inside the great army's winter camp', *Current Archaeology*, 281 (July 2013), 12–19. 28 R. Hall and G. Williams, *A riverine site near York: a possible Viking camp?*, in preparation.

Wareham and Reading,²⁹ but since the sites themselves have not been investigated they will not be considered in detail here.

Viking camps may also be observed in the Frankish kingdoms. Overwintering is first recorded in 843, when Vikings who had been attacking Nantes and the coast of Aquitaine 'landed on a certain island [usually identified as Noirmoutier], brought their households over from the mainland and decided to winter there in something like a permanent settlement'.³⁰ Overwintering is subsequently reported in the Frankish annals on a number of occasions, including some of the same sort of year-on-year campaigns as seen in England. Indeed, the force that raided in England between 892 and 896 came from the Continent and returned there once raiding on England was abandoned. Possible Viking fortifications have been identified at Péran and Trans in Brittany, though these are relatively small at around 3.7 and 0.7 hectares respectively.³¹ Relatively small camps may have been the norm except for extremely large forces, since warbands did not necessarily all stay in one place. A force on the Seine in 861 'split up according to their brotherhoods into groups allocated to various ports'.³² This reference is unusual, but an element of dispersal would have made sense for logistical reasons even where specific camps were recorded. Where details are given of such camps, they involved the occupation of either existing towns or the combination of earthworks and a river or rivers typical of *longphuir*.³³

Campaigning on such a large scale as in England and France is not recorded in Wales, but a small fortified settlement has been discovered at Llanbedrgoch on Anglesey.³⁴ This appears to be a native site, but shows clear evidence of Viking activity and the finds show some similarities to those from Woodstown, Linn Duachaill, Torksey and ARSNY, including evidence of exchange based on the use of both coins and bullion, although both the site and the number of finds are considerably smaller than at Woodstown, Torksey and ARSNY.³⁵ By contrast, despite extensive historical, archaeological and place-name evidence for Viking settlement in Scotland and the Isle of Man, neither has yet produced a

29 N. Brooks and J. Graham-Campbell, 'Reflections on the Viking-Age silver hoard from Croydon, Surrey' in N. Brooks, *Communities and warfare, 700–1400* (London, 2000), pp 69–92; M. Archibald, 'Two ninth-century Viking weights found near Kingston, Dorset', *BNJ*, 68 (1998), 11–20; Graham-Campbell, 'Archaeology of the "great army"'. 30 *The Annals of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. J.L. Nelson (Manchester, 1991), s.a. 843. 31 N.S. Price, 'Viking armies and fleets in Brittany: a case study for some general problems' in H. Bekker-Nielsen and H.F. Nielsen (eds), *Beretning fra tiende tværfaglige vikingesymposium* (Odense, 1991), pp 11–13; N.S. Price, 'Viking Brittany: revisiting the colony that failed' in Reynolds and Webster (eds), *Early medieval art and archaeology*, pp 731–42. 32 *Annals of St-Bertin*, s.a. 861. 33 For example, *The Annals of Fulda*, ed. and trans. T. Reuter (Manchester, 1992), s.a. 882, 891. 34 M. Redknapp, 'Viking-Age settlement in Wales and the evidence from Llanbedrgoch' in J. Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home: settlement in the Viking period. Proceedings of a conference on Viking-period settlement, at Cardiff, July 2001* (Leeds, 2004), pp 139–76. 35 M. Redknapp, 'Silver and commerce in Viking-Age north Wales' in J. Graham-Campbell and R. Philpott (eds), *The Huxley Viking hoard: Scandinavian settlement in the north west* (Liverpool, 2009), pp 29–41.

comparable camp, though metal detecting has recently produced finds from two sites in the Isle of Man that also indicate comparable systems of exchange. These sites have not been investigated archaeologically and their location and topography leave some doubt as to whether they should be considered as direct equivalents to *longphuirt*, or as a simpler form of site more akin to other recorded beach markets around the Irish Sea.³⁶ This essay will focus on the camps in England and Ireland, and on how these can be interpreted in the light of discoveries at the sites mentioned above and against the background of recent reinterpretations of Viking silver economies and exchange more generally. Nevertheless, comparisons will also be drawn with Llanbedrgoch and accounts of overwintering in Francia.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VIKING CAMPS

Before moving on to discuss the nature of exchange in this period, it is worth briefly commenting on the wider significance of these camps. First, understanding of both settlement and trade in Viking England and Ireland have been dominated since the 1970s by discoveries in parts of the major Viking towns of Dublin and York. This is hardly surprising, since both towns provided a wealth of material and remain among the most important (as well as the most thoroughly excavated) early medieval towns in the Viking world and beyond. On the other hand, the fact that no other towns in Britain and Ireland have produced a comparable volume of material raises a question of how typical these towns were. Both also emerge as sites of outstanding importance in the historical record, suggesting that they were atypical of wider Viking settlement in Ireland and England respectively, and the camps provide another picture of large Viking sites with a partially economic character.

Secondly, the camps date from a very different phase of Viking activity from that represented by the bulk of the evidence from the excavated towns. Both in England and in Ireland the bulk of the urban evidence comes from the tenth century and later, and it is potentially misleading to project this tenth-century view of Viking towns back to an earlier period.³⁷ In this respect one may note that identifiable Anglo-Saxon 'towns' are also rare in the ninth century and that the development of the Anglo-Saxon *burh* is a feature of the final years of the ninth

³⁶ I am grateful to Allison Fox for discussion of the Manx sites and for the opportunity both to see the sites and to examine the finds. For beach markets more generally, see D. Griffiths, 'Markets and "productive" sites: a view from western Britain' in T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (eds), *Markets in early medieval Europe: trading and 'productive' sites, 650–850* (Bollington, 2003), pp 62–72. ³⁷ H.B. Clarke, 'Proto-towns and towns in Ireland and Britain' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 331–80; R. Hall, 'Burhs and boroughs: defended places, trade and towns. Plans, defences, civic features' in H. Hamerow et al. (eds), *The Oxford handbook of Anglo-Saxon archaeology* (Oxford, 2011), pp 600–21.

century and of the tenth century. It is true that in recent years traces have begun to emerge of late ninth-century Dublin, but as yet only limited evidence of this phase is available both in Dublin and from within other later towns.³⁸ By contrast, several Viking camps offer an uncluttered view of pre-urban centres of the late ninth century. Woodstown seems to have been replaced by the later Waterford, and while Torksey developed in the tenth century into a *burh* of some importance with a sizeable pottery industry, the settlement was relocated slightly with the result that the *burh* is a short distance to the south of the camp rather than on top of it.³⁹ ARSNY seems to have had a very short life as an occupied site within an otherwise rural landscape, and while there is evidence for occupation at Linn Duachaill over a lengthy period, the limited scale of excavation so far means that it is not yet clear whether this was continuous or sporadic. All of these sites combine evidence of exchange and/or production with a military function (defences have not been identified yet at Torksey, but can be observed in the other three), although they lack evidence of the additional social and administrative functions that tend to make up the definition of a town, probably because some, if not all, of the camps were initially conceived as temporary rather than permanent settlements, even if some of them like Dublin continued to develop over an extended period. Woodstown, Torksey, ARSNY and perhaps also Linn Duachaill thus represent an important pre-urban phase in the earliest periods of settlement in both Ireland and England.⁴⁰ As discussed by Kelly elsewhere in this volume, several other sites identified as *longphuirt* show evidence of production and perhaps exchange (see also above, p. 94) and thus reinforce the picture presented by the sites named above.

Thirdly, the camps offer a different perspective on exchange from hoards, which have until recently dominated our understanding of silver economy in the Viking Age. Again, there is a chronological distinction since the vast majority of datable hoards were deposited in the 890s or later, although in England a few hoards of Viking character can be dated to the raiding period of the 860s and 870s, and in some cases hoards that are not diagnostically 'Viking' can also be directly identified with specific recorded Viking activity. Hoards associated with the movements of the *micel here* include probable examples from among the site assemblages from both Torksey and ARSNY.⁴¹ More importantly, the site finds provide a very different type of evidence. Leaving aside the range of possible reasons for which hoards might conceivably be assembled and deposited, hoards necessarily represent wealth removed from active circulation and use, while the

³⁸ Simpson, 'First phase'; Hall, 'Burhs and boroughs', pp 621–5. ³⁹ Hadley and Richards, 'Viking Torksey', 17–19. ⁴⁰ Williams, 'Towns and identities', pp 17–19. ⁴¹ Brooks and Graham-Campbell, 'Reflections on the Viking-Age silver hoard'; Blackburn, 'Viking winter camp', pp 225, 234–5; B. Ager and G. Williams, 'The hoard: a closely associated group of Viking period and late Saxon finds' in Hall and Williams, *Riverine site near York*. A higher proportion of Viking hoards from Ireland contain no coins and cannot be precisely dated. The

Table 5.1 Finds relating to exchange associated with the winter camps of the *micel here*, 871–6.

Date	Recorded events	Finds relating to exchange
871–2	<i>Micel here</i> moves to London and takes up winter quarters. The Mercians make peace	Croydon hoard
872–3	<i>Micel here</i> takes up winter quarters at Torksey. The Mercians make peace	Torksey detected assemblage
873–4	<i>Micel here</i> moves to Repton. Burgred driven into exile and some sort of accommodation is reached with his successor, Ceolwulf, apparently leaving him in control of southern and western Mercia	Repton enclosure, with coins in graves
874–5	<i>Micel here</i> divides. Northern group goes to Northumbria, takes winter quarters on the Tyne, conquers Northumbria. Southern group moves to East Anglia, takes winter quarters in Cambridge	Late hoard from Bamburgh? ARSNY detected assemblage?
875–6	Northern group divides up Northumbria and settles. Southern group moves to Wareham and takes up winter quarters. Alfred makes peace	ARSNY assemblage? Weights with coin-insets

bulk of finds from the camps appear to represent stray losses reflecting circulation and use. These finds can also in some cases be associated with specific recorded Viking activity (table 5.1). In England, an additional perspective is provided by single finds recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, including hacksilver, gold and silver ingots and weights. These generally lack the context of the site finds and therefore provide less clear information about how such items were used, although two lead weights from near Kingston in Dorset have plausibly been associated with the Viking overwintering at Wareham in 875–6.⁴² At the same time, their distribution makes it clear that the use of such items was not limited to towns and other proto-urban centres such as the camps and thus provides insights into the nature of exchange across wider areas of Viking settlement in England. This material is currently the subject of postdoctoral research by Jane Kershaw and it will be interesting to see how this fits with the evidence from the camps.

The dating of the camps is also significant in relation to monetary developments in the Viking homelands. A number of urban or pre-urban sites in Scandinavia and around the Baltic have recently been investigated (or reinvestigated), giving a clearer understanding of the chronology of developments in precious metal economy and prompting wider discussion of the character of these develop-

implications of the silver finds from Woodstown for the dating of such hoards are discussed in more detail by John Sheehan in this volume. ⁴² Archibald, ‘Two ninth-century Viking

ments. It now seems clear that, while the beginnings of long-distance trade pre-date the traditional beginning of the Viking Age in the final years of the eighth century and that both the importation of silver dirhams and the adoption of bullion currency began very early in the Viking Age if not slightly earlier, there was a marked escalation in both activities in the mid-ninth century, while the widespread importation and imitation of cubo-octahedral and oblate spheroid weights from the caliphate also seems to date from the third quarter of the ninth century.⁴³ It seems likely that this had a direct effect on the development of weight standards in Scandinavia, although the tiny differences between different putative weight standards and the somewhat larger variations between actual weights and specific nominal standards suggest that some of the published discussion of the metrology of Viking weights needs to be considered with caution. Opinions differ as to whether these weights were merely used to weigh silver bullion or whether, given the large number of such weights recovered from certain sites, the weights may have acted as tokens of equivalent value to the same weight of silver at a time when the silver supply from the east was interrupted.⁴⁴ Thus the development of Viking camps in both England and Ireland took place not as part of a well-established precious metal economy in Scandinavia but at a time of major economic change.

THE NATURE OF WEALTH AND EXCHANGE

Wealth in the Viking Age could take a variety of forms, not all of which are visible archaeologically in Viking camps or other trading centres. One of the most important measures of wealth, as in most societies, was the ownership of land, which will not be considered at all here since ownership (rather than temporary control) of land is not directly relevant to Viking camps, although this is not the case with regard to more permanent settlement. Indeed, I would argue that the acquisition and long-term exploitation of hinterlands was a key factor in the transition from the camp/*longphort* phase of settlement in the ninth century to the development of more permanent towns in the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁴⁵ Landed wealth aside, portable wealth also had a variety of forms, including livestock, slaves, precious metal, luxury trade goods and non-luxury trade goods (including commodities). Of these, livestock as a measure of wealth as distinct

weights'. 43 D. Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange: dealing with silver in the Viking Age* (Oslo, 2008); G. Williams, 'Silver economies, monetisation and society: an overview' in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Silver economies, monetisation and society in Scandinavia, AD800–1100* (Aarhus, 2011), pp 337–72. 44 U. Pedersen, 'Weights and balances' in Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange*, pp 119–95; H. Steuer, 'Principles of trade and exchange: trade goods and merchants' in A. Englert and A. Trakadas (eds), *Wulfstan's voyage: the Baltic Sea region in the early Viking Age as seen from shipboard* (Roskilde, 2009), pp 294–308; Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. 45 Williams, 'Towns and identities', pp 19–22.

from a source of food is largely invisible archaeologically, while the nature of the investigation of the Viking camps to date means that organic trade goods of the sort found in urban excavations are also unrepresented, although the evidence of metalworking at several sites may point to production for trade purposes. For example, both Torksey and ARSNY have large assemblages of strap-ends, in some cases apparently unfinished.⁴⁶ There is also evidence for metalworking at Woodstown, including the working of iron, silver and copper.⁴⁷ In addition, wealth in the form of precious metal can be seen in coins, hacksilver and ingots, as well as weights and balance fragments.

Forms of exchange were as varied as forms of wealth. At one extreme is the sort of activity associated with the archetypal Viking, an entirely non-reciprocal transfer of wealth from one party to another by means of stealth or through actual or threatened violence. Such activities include theft, plunder, extortion and ransoms. A more formal transfer of wealth took place in the form of tribute (from one political entity to another) and taxation (within a single political entity), but since tribute was often exacted by force or the threat of force, the boundary between the first group of activities and the second is not entirely solid and depends to a great extent on the question of whether or not the exaction was 'legitimate' – a point on which the two parties might have different opinions. Similarly, with the various layers of kings, sub-kings and over-kings recorded in medieval sources, the distinction between tribute and taxation might also be blurred on occasion. Other formal payments might include fines, tolls, heriots and other royal dues, legal compensation payments such as wergild, and tithes.

A third category of exchange may be categorized as social exchange, including any gifts and loans of property in which the exchange relates to the social relationship between the participants more than, or as well as, any direct economic function. This covers a wide range of activities, including formal gifts at occasions such as baptisms and weddings, visible symbols of lordship such as the granting of land, rings or swords in return for service, gift exchange between allies and less formal transactions that nevertheless had a social impact, such as gifts or loans that might create lasting obligations or dependency.⁴⁸

The final group of forms of exchange relates to the transfer of property in exchange for some form of payment. Again this involves a sliding scale of activity. At one extreme is barter, whereby the parties to a transaction directly exchange one type of property for another. Such exchange may be based on

⁴⁶ Blackburn, 'Viking winter camp', pp 224, 227, 231; N. Rogers, 'Dress accessories and personal items' in Hall and Williams, *Riverine site near York*. ⁴⁷ Sheehan, this volume. ⁴⁸ R. Samson, 'Fighting with silver: rethinking trading, raiding and hoarding' in R. Samson (ed.), *Social approaches to Viking studies* (Glasgow, 1991), pp 123–33; W. Miller, *Bloodtaking and peacemaking: feud, law and society in saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990), pp 77–108; S. Sindbæk, 'Silver economies and social ties: long-distance interaction, long-term investments – and why the Viking Age happened' in Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Silver economies*, pp 41–66.

established relationships between the relative values of the goods exchanged or may represent an ad hoc arrangement based on the specific circumstances, which might reflect seasonal variation, good and bad years for crops and livestock and so on. At the opposite extreme is purchase using a regulated currency, whereby the coin has an established legal value (possibly but not necessarily in excess of the value of its metal content) as a means of exchange and the storage of wealth.

Between these extremes come other possibilities. A recent focus of attention in an early medieval context has been the concept of commodity money. Commodity money differs from barter in that particular types of goods might have a quasi-monetary function as a means of exchange. This required that the object or objects had an end-value, lasted long enough to hold their value and could be quantified in some way to represent a standard and recognizable value. In some cases this might be an entire item.⁴⁹ This works, for example, with livestock, furs and beads, and Arab accounts refer to beads, furs and small pieces of silk of standard size functioning in this way in eastern Europe in the late ninth and tenth centuries.⁵⁰ Other items, such as grain or honey, might require containers of standardized size or weight to function in this manner. Commodity money can be observed in post-Viking written sources in both Norway and Iceland, although it is not always straightforward to distinguish between commodity money and simple payment in kind. The paucity of written records makes it even harder to identify commodity money in the Viking Age, but it has been suggested that its use was widespread, especially in areas that show little evidence of a metal-based economy.⁵¹ This is perhaps particularly relevant in an Irish context, since historical sources suggest that cattle were widely used as a measure of wealth.⁵²

Another intermediate stage between barter and coin-based purchase was the monetary use of silver bullion. This took the form of ingots, hacksilver and both whole and fragmented coins, as well as intact ornaments and jewellery. Without the guaranteed value of a regulated coinage, this relied on being able to measure both the quality and the quantity of silver involved. A variety of methods can be observed for the testing of silver quality in the Viking Age, while metal could be measured by weight. In this respect, bullion was more flexible than coinage, since the smallest weights and pieces of hacksilver are rather smaller than the smallest contemporary coins, while larger ingots effectively functioned as convenient high-denomination currency for both payment and storage of wealth.⁵³ The

49 D. Skre, 'Commodity money, silver and coinage in Scandinavia' in Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Silver economies*, pp 67–92; S. Gullbekk, 'Norway: commodity money, silver and coins' in Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Silver economies*, pp 93–112; Williams, 'Silver economies, monetisation and society', pp 352–3. 50 P. Lunde and C. Stone, *Ibn Fadlān and the land of darkness* (London, 2012), pp 46, 121, 165. 51 Skre, 'Commodity money'; Gullbekk, 'Commodity money'. 52 Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, pp 20–5, 84–5. 53 B. Hårdh, 'Hacksilver and ingots' in Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange*, pp 95–118; C. Kilger, 'Wholeness and holiness: counting, weighing and valuing silver in the early Viking period' in

physical form of objects was to some extent irrelevant, because items could be melted down and reworked into other forms. I have suggested elsewhere that bullion should be seen as a form of commodity money, with silver bullion deriving its value from its end-use as a material for the production of status items, with a function/value in social economies rather than monetary exchange. Arab accounts of trade with the Viking Rus suggest that in transactions between Arabs and Rus, the purchase of Rus trade goods for silver dirhams was seen by the Arabs in terms of straightforward monetary purchase, but in the case of the Rus as exchange for silver as a commodity.⁵⁴ One may note that a similar function of precious metal for display items in Ireland may explain the hoarding of non-numismatic silver in areas outside Viking control, even though monetary use of silver was largely confined to Viking areas.⁵⁵ If this view of bullion is accepted, one might also postulate the use of base metals as bullion of lower value, since iron, copper alloys and lead all had a value as materials for production and the presence on various Viking sites of the Northumbrian copper-alloy coins known as stycas, as well as finds of copper-alloy ingots, may point to the existence of a low-value copper-alloy bullion economy.⁵⁶

It is not always possible to identify different categories of object completely with specific types of exchange, not least because of the relative ease with which metal could be melted down and reused. Intact jewellery had an obvious function for the display of status, and ring giving is often noted as an example of a form of social exchange, but a brooch or an arm-ring represented a significant value in bullion. A number of types of arm-ring and neck-ring from around the Viking world have been identified that appear to have been produced to set weight standards and thus functioned as a recognizable currency of sorts.⁵⁷ Intact coins also seem to have functioned on occasion as bullion and could be transformed into items reflecting status and/or identity in the form of coin jewellery. Although hacksilver and ingots seem to represent straightforward bullion, it can be difficult to distinguish between bullion for the purposes of exchange and bullion as a material for metalworking unless this is clarified by the archaeological context.

Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange*, pp 253–326; M. Archibald, ‘Testing’ in J. Graham-Campbell (ed.), *The Cuerdale hoard and related Viking-Age silver and gold, from Britain and Ireland, in the British Museum* (London, 2011), pp 51–64. ⁵⁴ B. Hårdh, ‘Oriental–Scandinavian contacts on the Volga, as manifested by silver rings and weights systems’ in J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (eds), *Silver economy in the Viking Age* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2007), pp 135–48; Williams, ‘Silver economies, monetisation and society’, p. 353. ⁵⁵ For more detailed discussion of this issue, see Sheehan in this volume. ⁵⁶ Williams, ‘Silver economies, monetisation and society’, pp 353–4; Williams, ‘Trade and exchange’. ⁵⁷ Hårdh, ‘Oriental–Scandinavian contacts’; J. Sheehan, ‘Hiberno-Scandinavian broad-band arm-rings’ in Graham-Campbell (ed.), *Cuerdale hoard*, p. 99; G. Williams, ‘Kingship, Christianity and coinage: monetary and political perspectives on silver economy in the Viking Age’ in Graham-Campbell and Williams (eds), *Silver economy*, pp 181–3.

While these difficulties apply to the interpretation of individual finds, and to some extent to the interpretation of individual hoards, it is possible to observe patterns across groups of finds. John Sheehan has convincingly demonstrated regional variations in the types of hoard deposited in Viking-Age Ireland, representing different types of silver economy.⁵⁸ A similar broad distinction can be observed in England between purely coin-based hoards in Anglo-Saxon areas and a wider variety of hoard types in areas of Viking activity and settlement, although on current evidence there seems to be only limited regional variation within the main concentrations of Viking settlement in England, at least until individual parts fell under West Saxon domination.⁵⁹

THE MEANS OF EXCHANGE IN VIKING CAMPS

As the number of investigated Viking camps increases, it is possible to compare the finds from different camps in the same way that archaeologists and numismatists already compare hoards, and to ascertain trends in these finds assemblages that point to the means of exchange and thus to some extent to the character of exchange within the camps. Admittedly the number of such camps is still small and the distribution of different categories of finds is far from uniform. The difference probably in part reflects the extent and character of the archaeological investigation at each site, partly chronological developments and partly the fact that Viking raiders were interacting with different local economies in different parts of Britain and Ireland. In pre-Viking Ireland and Wales, there were probably forms of commodity money, most notably in the shape of cattle, but no locally minted coinage and little evidence for the use of imported coin, with precious metal apparently limited to social rather than economic exchange and even then in relatively short supply.⁶⁰ In England south of the Humber there was a controlled, coin-based economy based on locally minted silver pennies, with relatively little use of imported coin but with monetary alliances between the kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex.⁶¹ In Northumbria there was also a coin-

⁵⁸ J. Sheehan, 'Ireland's early Viking-Age silver hoards: components, structure and classification' in S. Stummann Hansen and K. Randsborg (eds), *Vikings in the West* (Copenhagen, 2000), pp 147–63; J. Sheehan, 'The form and structure of Viking-Age silver hoards: the evidence from Ireland' in Graham-Campbell and Williams (eds), *Silver economy*, pp 149–62. See also Sheehan in this volume. ⁵⁹ G. Williams, 'Hoards from the northern Danelaw from Cuerdale to the Vale of York' in Graham-Campbell and Philpott (eds), *Huxley Viking hoard*, pp 73–83. ⁶⁰ Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, p. 22; E. Besly, 'Few and far between: mints and coins in Wales to the middle of the thirteenth century' in B. Cook and G. Williams (eds), *Coinage and history in the North Sea world, c.500–1250* (Leiden, 2006), pp 701–20. ⁶¹ J. Booth, 'Monetary alliance or technical cooperation? The coinage of Berhtwulf of Mercia (840–852)' in M. Blackburn and D. Dumville (eds), *Kings, currency and alliances: history and coinage of southern England in the ninth century* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp 63–103; M. Blackburn and S. Keynes, 'A corpus of the *Cross and Lozenge* and related coinages of Alfred, Ceolwulf II and Archbishop

based economy, but based on the copper-alloy coins known today as stycas.⁶² Although Anglo-Viking coinage came to be issued in various areas of Viking settlement in England, this apparently post-dates all the camps in question, with the possible exception of a lead striking from Torksey. This may be interpreted as a trial-piece for a coinage imitating the *Lunette* type of Burgred of Mercia (856–74), although there is no other unequivocal evidence for Viking imitations of this particular coin type.⁶³

Finds from Viking camps of the ninth century include various combinations of locally minted coinage, imported coinage, hacksilver and weights (table 5.2). Of these, the most common category is hacksilver. This is found at all of the listed sites with the exception of Repton but, as was discussed above, the paucity of small finds from this site probably reflects the circumstances of the investigation, with the result that the absence of hacksilver and other categories of object under discussion here is not necessarily significant. The hacksilver should be seen together with the silver dirhams found at Woodstown, Torksey, ARSNY and Llanbedrgoch, since all of these had been fragmented. As noted, hacksilver may be interpreted in terms of either bullion for the purposes of exchange or raw material for metalworking. A crucible melt from the pre-urban trading centre of Kaupang in Norway, containing both hacksilver fragments and dirham fragments, shows these in the process of being melted down for reuse and analysis of the composition of Insular Viking jewellery from Scotland suggests that melted-down dirhams were a major component.⁶⁴ Metalworking could be a partial explanation for hacksilver at any of these sites, especially since there is clear evidence that metalworking took place at most if not all of them, but the apparent presence of hoards containing hacksilver at both ARSNY and Torksey points to monetary use. Furthermore, although there were some concentrations of finds, the presence of hacksilver at the various sites does not appear on current evidence to have been restricted to distinct workshop areas, in contrast to the association of an ingot (which probably did relate to metalworking) with a furnace at Woodstown.⁶⁵

Bullion economy would also account for the large numbers of weights found at Woodstown, Torksey and ARSNY, and on a smaller scale at other sites. These fall into three main groups. The first contains weights of types imported from, or influenced by, the Islamic caliphate. There are two main types – a cubo-octahedral one produced in various sizes with varying numbers of pellets on the

Æthelred in Blackburn and Dumville (eds), *Kings, currency and alliances*, pp 125–51; R. Naismith, *Money and power in Anglo-Saxon England: the southern English kingdoms, 757–865* (Cambridge, 2012). ⁶² E. Pirie, 'Contrasts and continuity within the coinage of Northumbria' in Cook and Williams (eds), *Coinage and history*, pp 211–40. ⁶³ Blackburn, 'Viking winter camp', pp 225, 250. ⁶⁴ S.E. Kruse and J. Tate, 'Appendix II. XRF analysis of Viking-Age silver from Scotland' in J. Graham-Campbell, *The Viking-Age gold and silver of Scotland (AD850–1100)* (Edinburgh, 1995), pp 73–9; M. Blackburn, 'The coin-finds' in Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange*, pp 32–3. ⁶⁵ Sheehan, this volume.

Table 5.2 Finds relating to the means of exchange from the main sites mentioned in the essay.

Camp	Anglo-Saxon silver pennies	Northumbrian stycas	Frankish deniers	Kufic dirhams (fragmentary)	Hacksilver	Cubo-octahedral weights	Oblate spheroid weights	Lead weights with insets/caps	Undecorated lead weights
Woodstown	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X
Linn Duachaill	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Repton	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Torksey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ARSNY	X	X	-	X	X	X	?	X	X
Llanbedrgoch	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X

square faces to indicate the ‘denomination’ and an oblate spheroid type that also in some cases has pellets indicating denomination on the flat surfaces, although others have pseudo-Arabic or other purely decorative designs (pl. 3). These weights were usually made of copper alloy, but in some cases appear to have been copper alloy over a lead or iron core. Both types were produced to broadly common weight standards, although individual objects often show wide margins of error around those standards.⁶⁶ These types are also recorded from a number of trading centres in Scandinavia and around the Baltic, with particularly large assemblages at Birka and Hedeby (Haithabu), and it has been suggested that they acted as a form of token currency with each weight corresponding to an equivalent value in silver.⁶⁷ This has been explained as filling a gap in the dirham supply to Scandinavia and thus a shortage of silver – an argument that does not seem particularly convincing when these weights are found on sites with plenty of hacksilver, as in the case of the Viking camps in Britain and Ireland. Nevertheless, a dual role as weight and currency does seem a plausible explanation for what appears to be a larger than usual cubo-octahedral weight from Woodstown made of silver with a weight of 2.51g,⁶⁸ although in the

⁶⁶ Pedersen, ‘Weights and balances’, pp 121–6, 138–48; Steuer, ‘Principles of trade and exchange’; Blackburn, ‘Viking winter camp’, pp 236–9, 260–2; Williams, ‘Trade and exchange’.

⁶⁷ Steuer, ‘Principles of trade and exchange’. ⁶⁸ Sheehan, ‘The *longphort*’, 291–2.

preliminary publication of the Woodstown weights Patrick Wallace rejects the identification of this object as a weight, without explaining his reasoning.⁶⁹ Weights made of silver are in any case extremely rare (unless one were to argue that weight-adjusted ingots are effectively also weights), but it is interesting to recall the two silver weights found in Co. Sligo, close to the suggested *longphort* of Fairyhill, and the idea of weights functioning as currency is discussed further below. Apart from the silver octahedron, a single cubo-octahedral weight has been found at Woodstown, with rather larger numbers recorded from Torksey (fifty-nine) and ARSNY (twenty-four, plus another reused as an inset in a lead weight), although several other unrecorded examples are believed to have been recovered from both sites. No oblate spheroid weights have been found at Woodstown, but three are recorded from Torksey and one object that may be the iron core from such a weight has been recorded from ARSNY. Since these weights, which are typically larger than the cubo-octahedral ones, often had iron cores and in some cases are known to have burst through the copper-alloy shells as a result of corrosion, it is possible that more have been found and not recognized, but the apparent rarity of the type both at Torksey and at ARSNY is consistent with recent research suggesting that, while cubo-octahedral weights were being widely used in Scandinavia in the 860s and 870s, the oblate spheroid weights became widely used only in the 870s and 880s.⁷⁰ The relative scarcity even of cubo-octahedral weights within the large assemblage of finds from Woodstown suggests that the bulk of the assemblage pre-dates Torksey.

A second group of weights is apparently of Insular Viking manufacture and examples are known from Woodstown, Torksey, ARSNY and Llanbedrgoch, as well as the two stray finds already mentioned that may be associated with the camp at Wareham and a number of single finds from England, Ireland and Wales. These weights were made of lead and have a variety of forms of decoration attached to them. In some cases the decoration has been applied directly to the top of the weight in the form of enamelling or something similar. One with a design applied in this fashion is recorded from Woodstown and another with a geometrical design from an unknown site in Yorkshire. Others include complete or fragmentary objects either pressed into the top or held into the top with pins. Most of these are fragments of reused metalwork of varying date, making it difficult to date the phenomenon precisely, but the group includes several weights with complete or partial coin insets. Almost all of these are either Northumbrian stycas or base-silver pennies of the *Lunette* type, suggesting a date of manufacture in the 860s and early 870s.⁷¹ Weights with decorated insets are also found in the Viking boat grave at Kiloran Bay, Colonsay, which included stycas and seems likely to date from the third quarter of the ninth century, and in a hoard from Talnotrie, Kirkcudbrightshire, which contains

69 Wallace, 'Weights and weight systems', p. 308. 70 Pedersen, 'Weights and balances', p. 132. 71 G. Williams, 'Anglo-Saxon and Viking coin weights', *BNJ*, 69 (1999), 19–36.

stycas and pennies of the *Lunette* type.⁷² Comparable weights have been found as stray single finds in England, Ireland and Wales.⁷³ The type is known in Scandinavia, but is comparatively rare there and this, together with the predominant use of Insular coins and metalwork, suggests that they were manufactured in Britain and Ireland rather than in the Scandinavian homelands.

On the current evidence it is difficult to argue for anything other than extreme broad weight standards within this group, in part because many such weights are chipped and/or corroded and partly because even the better-preserved examples seem not to conform to a single tight standard, while the Kiloran Bay 'set' certainly do not appear to correspond to a single meaningful standard. This perhaps reflects the absence of any centralized authority to enforce a single standard across Viking Britain and Ireland, and I have argued elsewhere that the function of the decoration was to personalize weights in order that each individual engaged in exchange could be certain that the amount of silver that changed hands was satisfactory according to his or her personal weights, irrespective of whether these conformed to a more widely recognized standard.⁷⁴ This contrasts with the more precise weight standards argued for assemblages from specific sites. Within a single site, or even a single sphere of political or economic authority, the imposition of a more precise standard is more readily explicable than the establishment of such a standard across a wider and more diverse area. In a specifically Irish context, Patrick Wallace has reiterated his view that the late Viking-Age weights from Dublin were targeted on a standard of an ounce of 26.6g and has argued that some of the earlier weights from the Dublin area also appear to target this standard, but he notes that this standard does not apply to other groups of Viking weights from Ireland and he offers a somewhat broader target standard of 22–23g for the assemblage of weights from Woodstown.⁷⁵

A final group of weights contains lead weights of various shapes and sizes, either entirely undecorated or decorated only with punch-marks or, more rarely, with incised patterns. These weights were found in large numbers at both Torksey and ARSNY, and in smaller numbers at Woodstown. These have rather more parallels in Scandinavia than the weights with Insular decorations and thus cannot readily be attributed to any particular region of manufacture. Once again it is difficult to argue for very coherent standards across the whole corpus of finds, although there do seem to be some clusters within individual sites of

⁷² J. Graham-Campbell and C.E. Batey, *Vikings in Scotland: an archaeological survey* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp 109, 118–22. ⁷³ Finds from England and Wales are mostly recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the finds database for which can be accessed at www.finds.org. These and other finds relating to the bullion economy are currently the subject of a study by Jane Kershaw. For weights of this type, see also S.E. Kruse, 'Late Saxon balances and weights from England', *Medieval Archaeology*, 36 (1992), 67–95; Redknap, 'Silver and commerce'; Wallace, 'Weights and weight systems', pp 309–11. ⁷⁴ Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. ⁷⁵ Wallace, 'Weights and weight systems', pp 313–15.

weights around the same size, shape and weight. This raises an additional question of whether these really are weights or gaming pieces, since one might expect some standardization of size and shape in the latter.⁷⁶ One may also question whether lead pieces functioned as a form of currency, either as tokens representing a higher value in silver or as a form of low-value commodity money based on a 'real' value for the lead as a material for metalworking. In other words, lead may have functioned as bullion in the same way as silver, but with a lower value. The low value would make it more flexible for day-to-day transactions, but would also explain why lead seems not to have been hoarded, unlike silver.⁷⁷ As with Heiko Steuer's interpretation of cubo-octahedral weights as a form of currency in places such as Hedeby, the presence within a single site of large numbers of objects of similar size and weight is perhaps more easily explicable by a demand/use for the objects themselves than by the use of such objects solely to regulate a demand for silver.

The use of base metals as bullion may explain the presence of Northumbrian stycas at both ARSNY and Torksey (plus two at Llanbedrgoch). According to established interpretations, the copper-alloy stycas ceased to be minted following the fall of Northumbria to the Vikings in 867 and in any case the copper-alloy coins would have been of little interest within a purely silver-based economy, although they would have been readily available at the time of the occupation and conquest of Northumbria. One could argue that the presence of significant numbers of stycas at both Torksey and ARSNY points to reuse of existing sites, but in neither case is there any other evidence that points to pre-Viking occupation in the ninth century, and while a concentration of stycas is perfectly plausible for a pre-Viking rural site in north Yorkshire, it is less likely for one on the Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire border. It therefore seems more likely that the Vikings themselves brought the stycas to both sites, in which case they must have had a use for them.⁷⁸ The same would appear to be true for the stycas at Llanbedrgoch, since these coins are not normally found in Wales.⁷⁹ I have raised elsewhere the possibility that a final phase of blundered stycas, represented at both ARSNY and Torksey and in a number of hoards, may be Viking imitations rather than pre-Viking issues, but this needs more detailed consideration before it can be suggested as more than a hypothesis.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, stycas are known from a number of sites, hoards and burials around Britain, Scandinavia and the Baltic, which suggests that they were circulating in Viking rather than native Northumbrian hands.⁸¹ This also needs to be seen against the background of other evidence for the use of copper alloy as bullion around the Viking world in

76 Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. 77 Williams, 'Silver economies, monetisation and society', p. 354; Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. 78 Blackburn, 'Viking winter camp', p. 225; Williams, 'Silver economies, monetisation and society', p. 354; Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. 79 Besly, 'Few and far between', pp 704, 716; Redknapp, 'Silver and commerce'. 80 Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. 81 Williams, 'Silver economies, monetisation and

the ninth century.⁸² With evidence for production of copper-alloy strap-ends at both Torksey and ARSNY, the end-value of copper alloy as a material for the production of strap-ends and other ornaments would be consistent with the use of copper-alloy stycas as, effectively, a form of commodity money. Even so, this does not preclude the possibility that stycas simply provided a commodity for metalworking, having lost all function as a means of exchange.

However stycas were being used when they were finally deposited, their presence at Torksey and ARSNY points to some form of Viking interaction with the coin-based economy of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, in contrast to the sites in Ireland and Wales where the economy of the surrounding native societies was not coin-based. A similar interaction explains the presence at Repton, Torksey and ARSNY of West Saxon and Mercian silver pennies, both of which circulated in both Mercia and Wessex in the 860s and 870s as a result of a series of monetary alliances. These could thus have been acquired at various points in the campaigns of the *micel here* and do not necessarily point to interaction with the immediately surrounding area at Repton or Torksey, although this is possible in both cases. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that such coins were circulating extensively in Northumbria in the mid-870s other than as a result of Viking activity and such coins at ARSNY are therefore likely to have been brought there by Vikings. As noted above, there was also movement between Viking groups on the Continent and Viking groups in Britain and Ireland, and this probably explains the presence of Carolingian coins at Torksey and Llanbedrgoch, as well as in the Croydon hoard associated with the Viking overwintering at London in 871–2.⁸³

CONCLUSIONS

Comparison of the material from the various sites considered here reveals a number of interesting points. Firstly, the combination of cubo-octahedral weights and hacksilver in datable contexts supports recent work in Scandinavia that suggests a major expansion both in the use of such weights and of the bullion economy in the 860s and 870s, while the comparative rarity of oblate spheroid weights (despite the fact that these are larger and therefore presumably more easily found than the cubo-octahedral ones) is consistent with the view that widespread use of these was slightly later. The Viking camps thus have to be seen against the background of a relatively new and expanding Viking bullion economy rather than something very well established that was exported from

society', p. 354; Williams, 'Trade and exchange'. ⁸² See above, n. 78 and S. Sindbæk, 'An object of exchange: brass-bars and the routinization of Viking-Age long-distance exchange in the Baltic area', *Offa*, 58 (2003), 49–60; G. Thomas, "'Brightness in a time of dark": the production of ornamental metalwork in ninth-century Northumbria' in R.O. Bork (ed.), *De re metallica: the uses of metal in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2005), pp 31–45; Williams, 'Silver economies, monetisation and society', pp 353–4. ⁸³ Brooks and Graham-Campbell,

Scandinavia to Britain and Ireland. The concentration of decorated weights at the Viking camps, compared with their comparative rarity in Scandinavia, reinforces the view that these were an Insular development and the relative proportions of these Insular weights and the cubo-octahedral ones at Woodstown suggest both that Woodstown is slightly earlier than either Torksey or ARSNY and that the development of such Insular Viking weights pre-dates the widespread use of cubo-octahedral weights in Britain and Ireland. This raises a wider question (which cannot be answered here) of whether the main impetus for the development of a bullion economy in the Viking Age came from contact with Islamic or with western European monetary economies, or from both simultaneously. The evidence of finds in Scandinavia points overwhelmingly to the east, but if the earliest Insular Viking weights pre-date the main phase of eastern influence, the picture may be more complicated.

A further point is the apparent interaction between the use of metals both in bullion exchange and in metalworking. This applies particularly to silver, which has long been recognized as having a major economic role, but also apparently to gold and perhaps also to copper alloy and lead, suggesting a more complicated and multi-layered system of bullion exchange than has previously been considered possible for the Viking Age. The evidence both for metalworking and for exchange in the Viking camps raises wider questions about who was exchanging what with whom and who was the intended market for any finished goods produced in the camps. Was the market purely internal within the camp, or does it represent trade between the Vikings in *longphuirt* and other camps and the populations of the surrounding area? Mary Valante has drawn attention to the fact that an account of the Vikings overwintering in Francia in 873 refers to a truce that made specific provision for a market.⁸⁴ This is a rare reference, but may reflect more widespread practice and the presence of Anglo-Saxon coins at Torksey, Repton and ARSNY yet not at Woodstown is at least consistent with the possibility that such camps were involved in trade for the surrounding populations. The treaty between Alfred and Guthrum specifically allows for trade across the frontier between the two kingdoms and such agreements may well have been a standard feature of 'making peace', something that the Vikings are frequently said to have done with the different kingdoms within which they overwintered.

Although the Alfred and Guthrum treaty is concerned with defined territories rather than with specific camps, it is important to recognize that the establishment of anything but extremely temporary camps meant control of, or at least interaction with, the surrounding territories in a way that prefigured the more permanent hinterlands of the late Viking towns in Ireland.⁸⁵ One of the reasons

'Reflections on the Viking-Age silver hoard'. ⁸⁴ *Annals of St-Bertin*, s.a. 873; Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, pp 41–2. ⁸⁵ J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland' in J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin*

that monastic and other estate centres were sometimes targeted as the location of Viking camps is that they offered the Vikings an opportunity to take control of existing stores of supplies, and a fundamental difference between a consciously temporary settlement and a settlement of the same size, developed with a view to the long term, was that the former meant that it was potentially possible to exploit the local resources with no regard to sustainability.⁸⁶ Even so, the size of the camps at Torksey and ARSNY suggests that the inhabitants may have had to look beyond the immediate surrounding area for supplies if they remained there for any length of time, and the acquisition of such supplies may sometimes have involved purchase or other forms of exchange rather than always simply expropriation; this may also have been true on a smaller scale of smaller camps on both sides of the Irish Sea. The account in the Annals of Ulster of Áed Finnliath's attack on the *longphuirt* of Cenél nEógain and Dál nAraide in 866 indicates that on that occasion the Irish raided cattle from the Vikings, but says nothing of how the Vikings had acquired those cattle in the first place. Another element in the targeting of existing estate centres as the location of Viking camps may have been the desire to usurp their role, temporarily or otherwise, within local and regional networks of trade,⁸⁷ although this raises larger questions concerning the nature and extent of pre-urban or proto-urban trade in both England and Ireland before the Viking settlements.

Further work is required to understand more fully the nature of exchange within the Viking camps and particularly the relationship between sites in England and Ireland, and between each site and the surrounding area and society. Such understanding may be facilitated by more extensive investigation of the sites already identified and by the identification and investigation of further sites on the basis either of historical records or of the site characteristics discussed by Kelly in this volume. Even so, there is no doubt that recent discoveries on both sides of the Irish Sea have already fundamentally altered our understanding of the character of Viking camps and of their importance as precursors to the later towns as centres of production and exchange.⁸⁸

OSA (Kilkenny, 1988), pp 49–78; J. Bradley, 'Some reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin in the ninth century' in J. Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world: studies in honour of Howard B. Clarke* (Dublin, 2009), pp 39–62; Williams, 'Towns and identities', pp 19–21; Hall and Williams, *Riverine site near York*.
 86 Williams, 'Towns and identities', p. 19. 87 C. Downham, 'The historical importance of Viking-Age Waterford', *JCS*, 4 (2004), 88. 88 This essay has benefited from an exchange of ideas over several years with the late Mark Blackburn and Richard Hall concerning the Torksey and ARSNY sites respectively. Both of these scholars died in autumn 2011, after the original lecture was given but before it could be written up, and I should like to express my gratitude for their input. I am also grateful to Eamonn Kelly, Stephen Harrison and John Maas for discussion of *longphuirt* and to John Sheehan, Søren Sindbæk and Andy Woods for discussion of the economic issues. Any mistakes are of course my own.

Vikings at Annagassan: the evidence of the annals and the wider context

COLMÁN ETCHINGHAM

Recent archaeological confirmation that there was a Viking base at Linn Duachaill/Annagassan prompts a reassessment of the annalistic evidence for that base. Clusters of references in the mid-ninth and earlier tenth centuries cannot reveal whether the base was continuously occupied over that period. It is apparent that the base was closely linked with that at Dublin and that both owed something to strategic considerations arising from their respective frontier locations. Attention is directed in this essay to the political purpose of the Vikings when these bases were established. Parallels are adduced from England and especially from Francia of the mid-ninth century for frontiers as a determinant of the location of Viking bases. The possibility of direct links between the Vikings of the Loire and those of eastern Ireland is briefly canvassed.

While historical evidence for the Vikings in Ireland is more or less finite, archaeology has provided substantial new evidence, in particular since modern excavations began at Dublin in the 1960s. The new data that archaeology alone can yield has been underlined more recently by the discovery of Woodstown near Waterford in 2003–4 and of Annagassan, Co. Louth, in 2010. While Woodstown was entirely unexpected, Annagassan was revealed by a modest research excavation, prompted in part by references in the mid-ninth- and earlier tenth-century annals to a Viking base at Linn Duachaill, with which Annagassan was identified (fig. 6.1).

There is, of course, much scope for further archaeological work at Annagassan. The existence of Linn Duachaill having now been established archaeologically, however, it seems timely to reassess the annalistic evidence for the historical significance of the Viking base there. Annalistic notice of Linn Duachaill comprises three discrete clusters of references, in 841–2, 851–2 and 926–7. It is noteworthy that each cluster of references links the Viking base at Linn Duachaill with Dublin. Let us briefly survey the evidence, before proceeding to evaluate it.

The establishment of a Viking base at Linn Duachaill in 841 is reported in the annals, together with that at Dublin, as follows:

A *longport* at Linn Duachaill from which were plundered the communities and churches (*tuatha 7 cealla*) of Tethbae [Co. Longford]. A *longport* at Duiblinn from which were plundered Leinster and Uí Néill, both communities and churches, as far as Slieve Bloom [Cos Laois and Offaly].¹

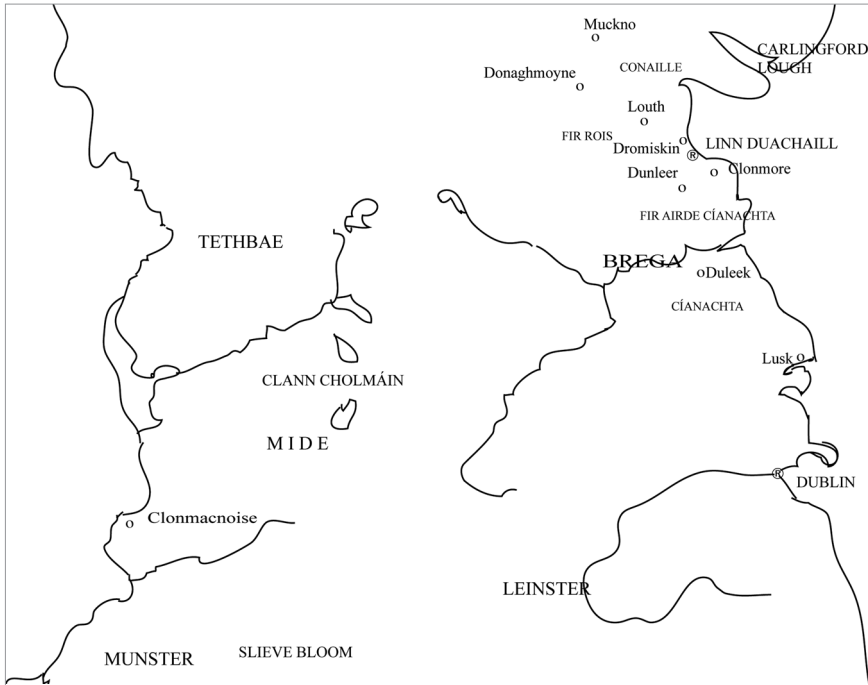
The year 841 is usually regarded as that of the foundation of Viking Dublin. This is due partly to a report that there were Vikings ‘still’ at Dublin in 842. It may also owe something to the fact that *longphort*, a usage unattested in the annals before 841, has assumed the status of a defined ‘monument’ or ‘site type’ ‘in some minds’, an assumption that was questioned by Ragnall Ó Floinn some years ago. His caution seems justified, firstly on the grounds that the traditional terms *dún* and *dúnad* also designate Viking bases, encampments or fortifications in the contemporary usage of the annalists in the mid-ninth century.² Moreover, more extensive archaeological investigation than has as yet proved possible at sites such as Annagassan and Woodstown would seem necessary before it can safely be concluded that the neologism *longphort* defines a new and distinctive monument type. As regards the significance of the events reported in 841, the presence of a sixty-ship fleet on the Liffey as early as 837³ suggests that 841 might be merely one stage in a process whereby Vikings established themselves in the vicinity of Dublin. A change in the character of Viking engagement with Ireland in the 830s and 840s is discussed below. Nevertheless, the use of *longphort* to describe, if not to define, the Dublin and Linn Duachaill bases in 841 is noteworthy, as is deep penetration of the midlands from both.

Linn Duachaill, like Dublin, was still occupied in 842, concerning which we may consider the following:

Plunder of Clonmacnoise by heathens from Linn Duachaill ... Mórán mac Indrechtaig *abbas* of Clogher [Co. Tyrone] captured by the foreigners of Linn and his killing by them afterwards. Commán *abbas* of Linn Duachaill wounded and burnt by heathens and Irish.⁴

Of these events, the raid on Clogher is not certainly attributable to the Vikings of Linn Duachaill. The non-specific Linn prompts uncertainty, since a fleet or band of sea-rovers (*longas*) is reported both at Linn Rois on the Boyne and at Linn Sailech in east Ulster in the immediately preceding record for the same year.⁵ Even discounting this, however, the annals testify abundantly to further deep penetration of the midlands in 842 by the Vikings of Linn Duachaill (like their Dublin counterparts). Also attested is their involvement in the first

1 *AU*, s.a. 840 (the editors’ trans. is slightly modified). 2 Ibid., s.a. 841; R. Ó Floinn, ‘The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland’ in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 161, 164. See also *AU*, s.a. 844 (Lough Ree and Cluain Andobuir); *CS*, s.a. 848 (Cork). 3 *AU*, s.a. 836. 4 Ibid., s.a. 841 (trans. slightly modified). 5 Ibid.



6.1 Linn Duachaill and other Irish locations and political entities mentioned in this essay.

recorded Viking alliance with Gaelic Irish, as a result of which the local ecclesiastical leader was killed.

Linn Duachaill is not again mentioned until 851, with a further probable reference in the following year:

851: Coming of Black Heathens (*Dubgennti*) to Áth Cliath and they inflicted a great slaughter of Fair Foreigners (*du Fhinngallaibh*) and they plundered the *longport* of both people and wealth. A plunder by Black Heathens at Linn Duachaill and a great slaughter of them.

852: Devastation of Armagh by the foreigners of Linn on ‘summer Easter Day’ (*die Samchásc*, that is seven weeks after Pentecost).⁶

We can be more confident that the reference of 852 is to Linn Duachaill than in the case of 842, because no other Viking base called Linn is mentioned in 851–2. The Vikings designated Black Heathens were evidently newcomers who devastated the Dublin base, where the incumbents are distinguished as Fair

⁶ Ibid., s.a. 850, 851 (trans. slightly modified).

Foreigners. The attack by Black Heathens at Linn Duachaill had a different outcome, apparently, since the natural reading of the record suggests that the newcomers were worsted.⁷ Success for the incumbent Fair Foreigners at Linn Duachaill in 851 foreshadowed their ultimate triumph in the struggle for overall supremacy among the Vikings of Ireland, as I argue elsewhere, contrary to the case recently made by David Dumville and Clare Downham.⁸ According to my interpretation Amláiph, son of the king of *Laithlinn*, who arrived in Ireland in 853, restored the old order of the Fair Foreigners. If this interpretation is correct, the Vikings of Linn who raided Armagh in 852 were Fair Foreigners. The old order prevailed at Dublin and presumably at Linn Duachaill, if the latter continued to be occupied by Vikings after 852. A brief outline of my case is in print and it is elaborated in different degrees of detail in two works yet to be published.⁹ Since the Linn Duachaill base was involved in a conflict between rival Viking factions that determined the future political order in ninth- and tenth-century Ireland, it will be as well to summarize briefly here how I interpret matters differently from Dumville and Downham. Full justification of my position is impossible in this context, however, since it involves detailed analysis of a substantial body of evidence.

Alfred Smyth in the 1970s had rejected a literal interpretation of the colour terms *finn*, 'fair' and *dub*, 'black' applied to rival Viking factions and took them to refer, respectively, to 'old' established Vikings and 'new' incomers in ninth-century Ireland. They came to denote Dublin 'Norwegians' and York 'Danes', respectively.¹⁰ While accepting Smyth's attempt effectively to retranslate *finn* and *dub* in these contexts, Dumville followed by Downham denied that these epithets, compounded with 'foreigner' or 'heathen', were ethnonyms, but rather familial or dynastic appellations. They maintained further that the Black Foreigners prevailed at Dublin following the struggles of the mid-ninth century. I argue they were mistaken on all three counts. Firstly, the colour terms should continue to be translated 'fair' and 'black', but also carry abstract positive and

⁷ That this is the more likely interpretation of the outcome of the struggle at Linn Duachaill is argued in my forthcoming monograph *Viking raiders and Irish reporters: Viking plundering of churches and the Irish annals*. ⁸ Their comments are found in D.N. Dumville, 'Old Dubliners and new Dubliners in Ireland and Britain: a Viking-Age story' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 78–93 and C. Downham, *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp xvi–xx, 14–15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 35, 36n., 63, 70, 195–6, 225–6. ⁹ C. Etchingham, 'Laithlinn, "Fair Foreigners" and "Dark Foreigners": the identity and provenance of Vikings in ninth-century Ireland' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 84–7. For more detail, see my forthcoming "'Black Foreigners", "Fair Foreigners" and other foreigners: terms for Vikings in Irish annals' in T. Bolton and J.V. Sigurðsson (eds), *Transformations in Scandinavia and the north Atlantic*. The issues are treated most fully in *Viking raiders and Irish reporters*. ¹⁰ A.P. Smyth, 'The Black Foreigners of York and the White Foreigners of Dublin', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 19 (1975–6), 111–17.

negative connotations denoting nuanced Irish perceptions of established Vikings and newcomers. Here Smyth, Dumville and Downham are all mistaken. These epithets, in fact, do appear to denote, respectively, primarily 'Norwegian' and primarily 'Danish' Viking factions that, in an Insular context, are associated chiefly with Dublin or Ireland and with York or Britain. Here Smyth was right and Dumville and Downham wrong. My conclusions on these two points must be taken on trust in the present context; the evidence is set out elsewhere.

The third point is of more direct relevance: Dumville and Downham are also mistaken in thinking the Black Foreigners prevailed at Dublin after 851–2. My case rests on a detailed analysis of the annalistic profile of the Vikings from the mid-ninth century to the mid-tenth. Two points must suffice here. The old Viking order in Ireland had been rocked to its foundations in the mid-ninth century by a series of events, notably the fall of Tómrair (Dórir), 'heir-apparent of the king of *Laithlinn*', in 848,¹¹ followed by the Black Foreigner incursions of 851–2. When Amlaíph imposed himself on Ireland in 853 and determined the future Viking order there, he did so as 'son of the king of *Laithlinn*', thus evidently restoring the order represented by Tómrair. Secondly, when in 877 Fair Foreigners and Black Foreigners are reported in conflict in Ireland for the last time, at Strangford Lough, comparison of different sources shows that the assailant, who was killed, Alpthann *dux*, 'chieftain' of the Black Heathens, was none other than Hálfðanr, ruler of York. Alpthann/Hálfðanr had in 875 killed Oistín mac Amlaíph (Eysteinn Áleifsson), son and apparently joint successor of the king of Dublin. The killer of Alpthann/Hálfðanr in 877 was Bárith (Bárðr) son of Ímar, who had jointly ruled Dublin with Oistín in 873–5 and was in 877 sole ruler of Dublin.¹² The regime established by Amlaíph and Ímar at Dublin in the 850s was not that of the Black Foreigners, but of their adversaries, and was challenged by the primarily York-based Black Foreigners in 875–7. On this matter, then, Smyth is in effect vindicated, as against Dumville and Downham, by a more complete survey of evidence than Smyth himself undertook.

Returning to Linn Duachaill itself, it is not revealed whether it continued under the sway of the Dublin Viking regime after 852. Linn Duachaill is not noticed again in the annals for over seventy years. We must look to future archaeological research, rather than history, to resolve the problem of whether it was occupied in the interim. Linn Duachaill suddenly reappears in the historical record in 926, as follows:

The fleet (*longus*) of Strangford Lough proceeded to Linn Duachaill, i.e. Alpthann mac Gothbrith, on the day before the nones [4th] of September.¹³

¹¹ *AU*, s.a. 847. ¹² For all of this, compare *ibid.*, s.a. 874, 876 with CGG, pp 24–7; CS, s.a. 881; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. G.N. Garmonsway (London, 1972), pp 74–5 (for 875). ¹³ *AU*, s.a. 925.

Alpthann mac Gothfrith (Hálfðanr Guðrøðsson) was a son of the king of Dublin and was apparently the leader of an expeditionary force based at Strangford Lough (Co. Down) since 924. Earlier in 926, before this fleet moved south to Linn Duachaill, it had mounted a captive-taking raid on Dunseverick (Co. Antrim). It then suffered defeat at Carlingford Lough (between Cos Down and Louth) at the hands of the leading northern king Muirchertach mac Néill.¹⁴ Having moved south to Linn Duachaill, the Vikings suffered further defeat by Muirchertach at an unidentified location, *Drochet Cluana na Cruimther*, with many casualties including Alpthann himself. The rest were besieged for a week at *Áth Cruithne*, again unidentified, until Gothfrith himself, 'king of the Foreigners' (*rí Gall*) arrived from Dublin to relieve them.¹⁵ The siege was apparently lifted and a Viking presence was maintained at Linn Duachaill. The annals for the following year, 927, report:

Departure of the fleet of Linn and departure of Gothfrith from Áth Clíath; and afterwards Gothfrith returned before the end of six months.¹⁶

Gothfrith departed from Dublin in an attempt to install himself at York in succession to his kinsman Sitriuc úa hÍmair (Sigtryggr Ívarsson), who had died earlier the same year. In this Gothfrith was unsuccessful, despite being joined in this venture by the Vikings of Linn Duachaill, whose interests are again closely linked with those of the Dublin regime.¹⁷

What are the implications of the three discrete clusters of references to Linn Duachaill? As already remarked, only archaeology can offer hope of resolving whether there was continuity of occupation of the base there between the mid-ninth century and the 920s, or even between the reported episodes of 841–2 and 851–2. The historical evidence does permit us to explore another implication of the Annagassan base, however. This is the strategic rationale for establishing and maintaining a base at such a location. Viking bases of the late 830s and early 840s are readily interpreted as affording access to inland waterways. Examples include explicit indications of fleets on the Boyne and on the Liffey in 837 and on Lough Neagh in 839–41, and circumstantial evidence for a fleet on the Shannon and Lough Erne from 835 or perhaps 834 to 838.¹⁸

Nevertheless, penetrating the hinterland via inland waterways cannot have been the intention behind the base at Linn Duachaill in 841, since the adjacent minor rivers Glyde and Dee offered limited opportunity for such penetration. Likewise, access to the hinterland along the Liffey from the Dublin base, established or reinforced in 841, was limited. In fact there was deep penetration

¹⁴ Ibid., s.a. 923, 925. ¹⁵ Ibid., s.a. 925. ¹⁶ Ibid., s.a. 926. ¹⁷ Accounts of these events are in A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: the history and archaeology of two related Viking kingdoms*, 2 vols (Dublin and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1975–9), ii, pp 19–24; Downham, *Viking kings*, pp 38–9. ¹⁸ AU, s.a. 833–40.

of the midlands by Vikings from both Dublin and Linn Duachaill in 841 and 842, evidently raiding overland and perhaps using seized or purchased horses.¹⁹ A 'geographical determinist' explanation of the location of early Viking bases, affording access to the hinterland via inland waterways, would appear not to fit the facts in these cases. Such an explanation may implicitly invoke a pure raiding impulse, rather than any more sophisticated political calculation.

Yet considerations of political strategy apparently motivated Viking activity from the later 830s. The position of some Viking bases of the 830s and 840s on political frontiers has been noted,²⁰ but the point merits emphasizing. Dublin was doubtless established with an eye to its position on the Uí Néill–Leinster frontier. Perhaps it was facilitated by what appears to have been a power vacuum in the midlands Uí Néill dynasty of Clann Cholmáin after the death of Conchobar mac Donnchada in 833, a vacuum that persisted until the later 840s.²¹ This evident interregnum may also have encouraged the establishment of the Linn Duachaill base, located on or close to the frontier of the midlands Uí Néill and northern Uí Néill spheres. Linn Duachaill was also on or close to the boundaries of local lordships – Fir Airde Cíanachta, Fir Rois and Conaille. Perhaps local rivalries between some of these lay behind the killing of 'Abbot' Commán of Linn Duachaill 842. This is the first Irish–Viking alliance on record, the precise ramifications of which are not disclosed, however, by the laconic terms of the record. In any event, the establishment of the base at Linn Duachaill coincides with an increasingly political strategy on the part of the Vikings, this being a feature of the developing Viking engagement with Ireland in the second quarter of the ninth century.

Before the 830s, Viking activity in Ireland consisted of small-scale intermittent raiding of churches and military encounters with the Irish on a similarly modest scale. Attempts to establish coastal raiding bases are clearly to be seen in the 830s. Among the earliest of these was a base at Inber Deae in 834–6, which there is reason to think was at Arklow, Co. Wicklow, on the east coast.²² In the central east of Ireland, the frequency and intensity of raids increased. The period 827–33 saw a series of raids to the north and south of the Boyne Estuary. This

¹⁹ An argument against the logistical feasibility of mounted overland raiding by Vikings in ninth-century Francia (C. Gillmor, 'Wars on the rivers: Viking numbers and mobility on the Seine and the Loire, 841–886', *Viator*, 19 (1998), 103–9) is thought-provoking, but need not preclude such raiding in ninth-century Ireland. Such raids need not have required more than a few days and Vikings could surely expect to fodder horses on, for example, ecclesiastical grain stockpiles such as are noticed in the (admittedly later) records of the church of Kells. See conveniently my *The Irish 'monastic town': is this a valid concept?* (Cambridge, 2010), pp 25–30. ²⁰ For example, in Ó Floinn, 'Archaeology of the early Viking Age', p. 162. ²¹ After the death of Conchobar mac Donnchada in 833 (*AU*, s.a. 832) Clann Cholmáin was apparently weakened until the later 840s by internal strife (*ibid.*, s.a. 838, 840 and compare 842, 844, 845) and defeat by Vikings (*ibid.*, s.a. 836), despite Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid asserting himself in and after 845 (*ibid.*, s.a. 844, 846). ²² C. Etchingam, 'Evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Wicklow' in K. Hannigan and W. Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: history and society*

activity prompted my suggestion twenty years ago that there is likely to have been a coastal Viking base somewhere between Dublin and Carlingford.²³ A reference in the annals for 827 does indeed seem to reflect the existence of such a base. Viking raiding activity along the central eastern coast in that year culminated in a retaliatory raid by unidentified Irish, described as a ‘plunder of Foreigners of the east’ (*organ Gall ind airthir*). Here ‘the east’ evidently refers to eastern Brega and the indication is that there was a Viking base on the mainland, or perhaps on coastal islands of north Co. Dublin, a base that was targeted in this Irish counter-raid.²⁴ This base can be regarded as an early precursor of the later bases at Dublin and Annagassan.

The year 837 saw significant developments in Viking activity. There were sixty-ship fleets on both the Liffey and the Boyne and a major battlefield defeat of the Southern Uí Néill. That year was also remarkable for the first identification of a Viking leader by name and title in the annals: ‘killing of Saxolb, chieftain of the Foreigners’ (*marbadh Saxoilbh toísigh na nGall*) at the hands of the Cianachta, in proximity to whom lay Annagassan. There was also extensive plundering of the hinterland by these fleets, and the first use of *Nordmanni*, ‘Northmen’ to describe the Vikings, a usage common among continental chroniclers.²⁵ By 837 at the latest, therefore, a political directing hand behind large-scale Viking expeditions must be postulated. It is not apparent whether Saxolb was that hand, or was merely an agent of a greater unidentified power.

The year 841, as we have seen, was marked by the simultaneous establishment or reinforcement of a base at Dublin and the establishment of one at Linn Duachaill/Annagassan. The identity and provenance of the leader(s) are not revealed, but it can scarcely be doubted that political direction or strategy was involved. It would appear that the two bases reflect a coordinated initiative. The first named Dublin leader was one Agonn (Hákon), who appears in the annals only in 847. Royal leadership is indisputably present by 848, when the killing of Tómrair (Dóir), ‘deputy’ (*tánaise*) to the king of *Laithlinn* is reported.²⁶ Some awareness of the wider importance of this Irish event is also apparently reflected in the Frankish Annals of Saint-Bertin.²⁷ In the following year, 849, a 140-ship fleet of the ‘king of the Foreigners’ (*rí Gall*) arrived, imposed itself on the incumbent Vikings, and created turmoil in Ireland. What was presumably this

(Dublin, 1994), pp 114–16. ²³ Etchingham, ‘Scandinavian settlement in Wicklow’, p. 114.

²⁴ *AU*, s.a. 826. For other references to *airther Breg*, ‘eastern Brega’, see *ibid.*, s.a. 783, 851.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, s.a. 836. The usage *Nordmanni* is discussed in two forthcoming papers: Etchingham, ‘Terms for Vikings’; C. Etchingham, ‘*Uita Findani*: a Hiberno-German window on the early Viking Age’ in R. Simek (ed.), *Between the islands: papers from symposia at Cambridge and Bonn*. ²⁶ *AU*, s.a. 846–7 and cf. *AFM*, s.a. 847. On *Laithlinn*, see C. Etchingham, ‘The location of historical *Laithlinn/Lochla(i)nn*: Scotland or Scandinavia?’ in M. Ó Flaithearta (ed.), *Proceedings of the seventh symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Uppsala, 2007), pp 11–31. ²⁷ *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G. Waitz (Hanover, 1883), s.a. 848 and compare 847; *The Annals of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. J.L. Nelson (Manchester, 1991), p. 66 and cf. p. 65.

Viking force, with Irish allies, challenged seriously the Uí Néill over-king Máel Sechnaill in 850.²⁸ This was followed by the conflict of 851–2, when the Black Heathens assailed the incumbent Fair Foreigners at Dublin and Annagassan. The assailants ultimately lost out, as maintained above, with the arrival in 853 of Amláiph ‘son of the king of *Laithlinn*’, who took hostages from the ‘Foreigners’ and tribute from the Irish. He evidently restored the *Laithlinn* regime associated with Tómrair, who had been killed in 848.²⁹

I discuss these events elsewhere in more detail, but what is clear is the emergence of Viking royal direction and a developing political strategy, part of which was the location of Viking bases from the mid-830s. This strategy exploited Irish political divisions and is the Irish context for the establishment of Linn Duachail. The development of a strategic approach related to political ambitions among the Vikings in Ireland should also be associated with events elsewhere. Links between Viking activity in Ireland and Britain have been well rehearsed and the Dublin–York connection of the first half of the tenth century in particular has been much discussed.³⁰ This was shaped by the dynastic ambitions of the descendants of the ninth-century Viking king Ímar (Ívarr). In the era of Ímar himself, 857–73, it is clear that Irish Vikings were active at least in north Britain, though Ímar’s putative involvement with the conquest of what was to become the English Danelaw in the 860s and 870s is highly controversial.³¹

However that may be, there is a parallel with the Irish Viking experience to be found in England of the 830s, involving the apparent exploitation of frontier rivalries by the Vikings. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 838 reports an alliance between Viking invaders of the West Country and the Cornishmen, an alliance that then confronted Egbert, king of Wessex. This combination was defeated by the West Saxons, but it clearly parallels the Viking alliance with local Irish against the over-king Máel Sechnaill in 850, noticed above. By contrast with Ireland of the late 830s and 840s, however, it is not apparent that the Viking intervention in the West Country in 838 involved establishing a base in the region, although that is not ruled out by the wording of the record. The first explicit indication that Vikings overwintered in England, at Thanet in Kent, does not occur until 850.³² From the 860s, Viking activity in England was, of course, characterized by relatively large armies that ultimately achieved a substantial territorial conquest. This was rather different from the Irish experience of the Vikings, with which a better parallel may be found in ninth-century Francia.

Before the 840s, the Frankish experience of the Vikings was essentially a product of relations between Carolingian and Danish rulers. It consisted largely

²⁸ *AU*, s.a. 848–9. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, s.a. 850–2. ³⁰ Notably by Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*. ³¹ As shown by *AU*, s.a. 865, 869–70. A much-disputed case for identifying Ímar with the Ingvar of English sources is made in A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian kings in the British Isles, 850–880* (Oxford, 1977). ³² *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, pp 62 (s.a. 835), 64–5 (s.a. 851).

of frontier warfare, diplomacy and inter-dynastic interference, as well as trade with Frisia and in particular with Dorestad. Danish warlords sometimes acquired a foothold within Francia, notably by grants of land in Frisia as a bulwark against other Vikings. This is reported for the first time in 826, when Haraldr, a Danish royal whose rivalry with others was exploited by Louis the Pious, was granted Rüstringen in northern Frisia, to serve as a retreat should his Danish political intrigues go awry, which they did.³³ Danes conversely appear to have exploited revolts by sons of the emperor Louis the Pious and Danish raids were undertaken in Frisia, notably targeting Dorestad repeatedly in the mid-830s.³⁴ In the aftermath of Louis' death in 840, when his sons squabbled with each other, one of the latter, Lothar, repeated his father's initiative by granting the aforementioned Haraldr the island of Walcheren in southern Frisia.³⁵

Danish raiders were pushing farther south down the Channel coast as far as the Seine in the early 840s.³⁶ In fact, already by the mid-830s, Vikings mounted raids much farther south, targeting the monastery on the island of Noirmoutier near the mouth of the Loire. These raids on Noirmoutier are recorded not in the main West Frankish Annals of Saint-Bertin, but in the less well-known and more laconic Aquitainian Annals of Angoulême.³⁷ They were the prelude to a major raid on Nantes, on the lower Loire, in 843, by Vikings who are then said to have based themselves for the winter on an unnamed island, probably Noirmoutier. The wording of the account in the Annals of Saint-Bertin is intriguing: the 'Northmen' (*Nordmandi*) brought their 'households' (*domibus*) over 'from the mainland' (*a continenti*) to winter on the island 'in something like a permanent settlement' (*velut perpetuis sedibus*).³⁸ The Vikings were apparently based here continuously for at least a number of years. The event is regarded as inaugurating a Viking presence on the Loire that persisted into the tenth century,³⁹ although such a presence is but intermittently mentioned in the chronicles. What is striking is the frontier location that had been chosen by these Vikings. To the south lay Aquitaine, where the local branch of the Carolingian dynasty was regularly in revolt against its West Frankish overlords. For example, Pippin II of Aquitaine allied with the Vikings in 857 and collaborated with them in a raiding expedition.⁴⁰ To the north-west of the Loire/Noirmoutier region lay Brittany, which was also often in conflict with the West Frankish rulers. The

33 *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. G.H. Pertz and F. Kurze (Hanover, 1895), s.a. 826 and compare 827. 34 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 834–7; *Annals of St-Bertin*, pp 30, 33, 35, 37. 35 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 841; *Annals of St-Bertin*, p. 51. 36 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 841–2; *Annals of St-Bertin*, pp 50, 53. 37 *Annales Engolismenses*, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hanover, 1859), s.a. 834, 835–6. For an even earlier expedition by thirteen ships that ventured as far as the Seine and even Aquitaine, see *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 820. On early Viking activity in western Francia, see in brief N. Price, *The Vikings in Brittany* (London, 1989), p. 22. 38 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 843; *Annals of St-Bertin*, pp 55–6. 39 J.L. Nelson, 'The Frankish Empire' in P. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), p. 26. 40 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 857; *Annals of St-Bertin*, p. 84.

Bretons were sometimes allied with and sometimes at odds with the Vikings in the 850s, 860s and 870s.⁴¹ It is clear that the frontier location of the Loire/Noirmoutier Vikings allowed them to exploit regional rivalries in much the same way as they did in Ireland.

Neil Price distinguishes the Loire Vikings from the Danish forces that were active farther north in Francia.⁴² Most interesting is the identification by the Annals of Angoulême of the Nantes/Loire Vikings of 843 as Westfaldingi – that is to say, they came from Vestfold in south-east Norway.⁴³ This was a region that the Danish kings had sought to subjugate thirty years earlier,⁴⁴ but the position of Vestfold in 843 is unknown. From the perspective of the most proximate Frankish chronicler, however, it was apparently distinguishable from the main Danish forces that had previously focused chiefly on northern Frankia. Michael Dolley long ago suggested a connection between these Westfaldingi of the Loire in the mid-840s and a remarkable hoard of exclusively Carolingian coins deposited c.847 at Mullaghboden, Co. Kildare.⁴⁵ This was the era when Tómrair, ‘deputy’ (*tánaise*) to the king of *Laithlinn* was active in Ireland and the Battle of Sciath Nechtain (Skenagun, Co. Kildare), in which he was killed in 848, occurred about 32km from Mullaghboden. It was at this point that the Frankish chroniclers took an interest in Viking activity in Ireland, as noted above. I argue elsewhere that *Laithlinn* should be sought in Scandinavia and not Scotland, contrary to what others have proposed, and that the regime of the Fair Foreigners with which it can be identified was primarily ‘Norwegian’, by contrast with the primarily ‘Danish’ Black Heathens.⁴⁶

Let us entertain for a moment some speculations. Godfred, son of Haraldr of Denmark, brought a fleet round to the Loire in 853 and came into conflict there with rival Vikings led by Sidroc (Sigtrygr?), who in 854 allied with the Bretons on the Loire.⁴⁷ Was this a case of mainstream royal ‘Danish’ Vikings intruding on the Loire Vikings’ patch? Could these events of the mid-850s be related to the Black Heathen–Fair Foreigner struggle of 851–2 in Ireland, a backwash in the Frankish theatre? One might speculate further on possible links of the Loire Vikings with Ireland. A famous raiding expedition to Moorish Spain was undertaken in 844 by the Loire Vikings, while Spain and north Africa were the targets of another Viking expedition in 859–60.⁴⁸ It is well known that the semi-annalistic, semi-literary Irish text of perhaps the eleventh century, the Fragmentary Annals, claims that captive ‘black men’ (literally ‘blue men’, *fir gorma*) were brought to Dublin by the Vikings in the mid-ninth century, a story

41 For an account of these affairs, see Price, *Vikings in Brittany*, pp 26–34. 42 Ibid., p. 23.

43 *Annales Engolismenses*, s.a. 843. 44 *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 813. 45 M. Dolley, ‘The 1871 Viking-Age find of silver coins from Mullaghboden as a reflection of Westfalding intervention in Ireland’ in *Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Årbok* (Oslo, 1961–2), pp 60–1.

46 See Etchingham, ‘Location of historical *Laithlinn*/*Lochla(i)nn*’ and items noticed at n. 9 above. 47 Price, *Vikings in Brittany*, pp 26–8, citing the *Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Redon*.

48 *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 844, 859, 860; *Annals of St-Bertin*, pp 60, 90, 93.

variously entertained or dismissed by earlier commentators.⁴⁹ Might there be some reflex of reality in this at first sight outlandish tale?

A direct connection between the Loire Vikings and the Irish Vikings in the mid-ninth century must be rated no more than possible, on the evidence to hand, with a link to raiding in Moorish Spain an even more tenuous possibility. A further tantalizing glimpse may be mentioned in conclusion. The Viking fleet that arrived at Waterford harbour in 914, marking the first return in force of Vikings to Ireland since 902, had arrived from Brittany via the Severn Estuary.⁵⁰ Whatever about direct connections, there is clearly a parallel between the Vestfold Viking base at the mouth of the Loire, established in 843, and contemporary bases in Ireland like Linn Duachaill and Dublin. There was a similar strategy to exploit local political divisions in order to maximize Viking opportunities for gain, whether by plunder, pay-offs, tribute or mercenary hire fees. In both West Frankish and eastern Irish theatres, the locations of Viking bases appear to have been carefully chosen with such considerations in mind.

⁴⁹ *FA*, pp 118–21, no. 330. The story is given credence by Smyth, *Scandinavian kings*, pp 62–6, who would link it with the 859–60 expedition. It is curious that Old Norse, like Middle Irish, terms a ‘black man’ a ‘blue man’ (*blá maðr*). ⁵⁰ Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*, i, p. 64.

A Viking warrior grave from Dublin

LINZI SIMPSON

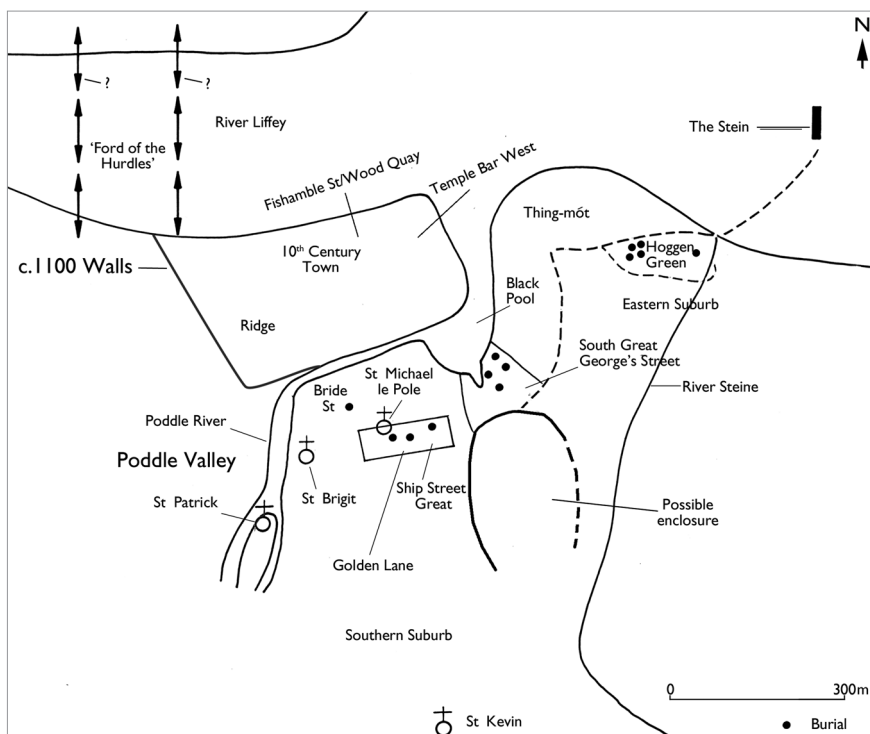
This essay describes a Viking furnished grave, probably that of a warrior, found during a large archaeological excavation at South Great George's Street, Dublin. The site was located on the bank of a pool in the River Poddle, where a settlement was found, probably part of the documented *longphort* or 'ship camp' established there during the Viking invasions as a permanent base in 841.

The burial was one of a group of four that may have formed part of a much larger grave-field stretching out along the southern bank of the Liffey. The skeleton was almost intact and, as a result, has provided considerable detail about this young man, including his age, approximate date of death, physical characteristics, general medical condition, potential familial connections and where he was likely to have been reared. Smaller details have also been revealed – how he was buried, evidence of his last activities and the personal items chosen to accompany him to his grave. The results of the excavation even established what happened to his corpse shortly after he died, completing the circle of information about this interesting individual.

VIKING FURNISHED BURIALS

In 2003 a large archaeological excavation was directed by the writer along South Great George's Street, Dublin, outside the medieval walled city that, at boulder clay level, produced some very exciting results (fig. 7.1; pl. 4).¹ In summary, the remnants of a ninth- and early tenth-century Viking settlement were found, fronting on to what was once a large tidal pool, just south of the later Anglo-Norman castle (fig. 7.2).² These early levels included the remains of four young males, presumed to be warriors since they were buried with militaristic grave-goods along the rim of the pool, which was fed from the west by the Poddle.

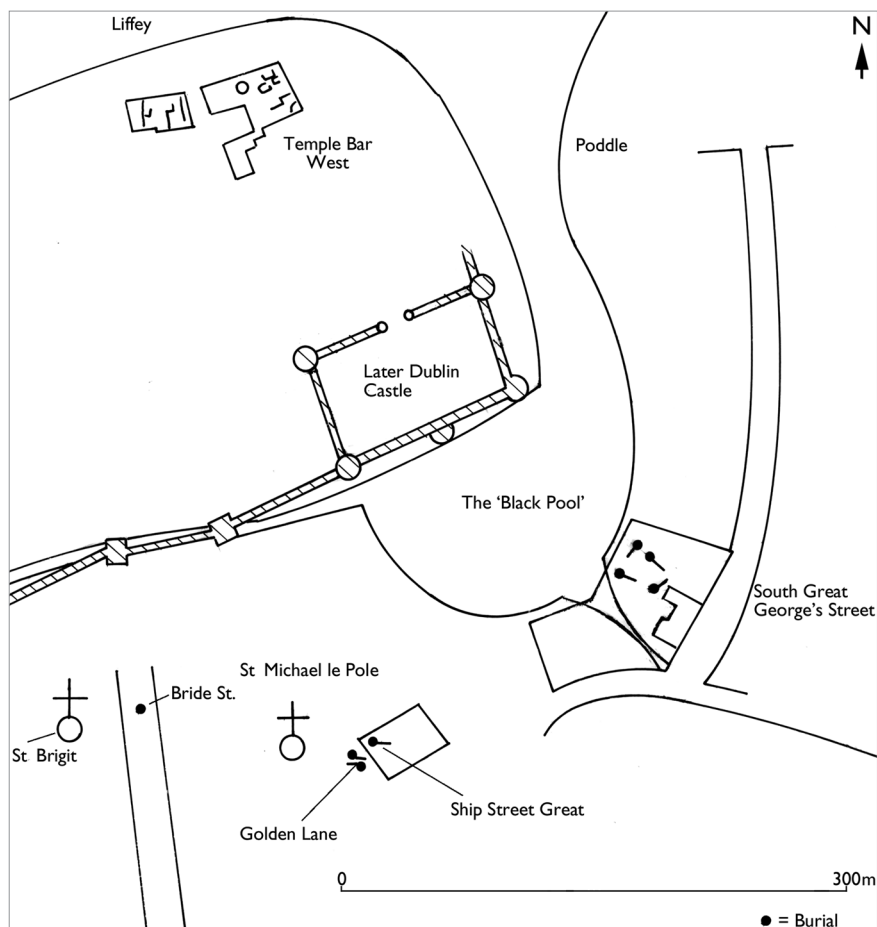
¹ The writer, acting for the former Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd, directed the excavation, which was carried out on behalf of Dunnes Stores, between April and December 2003 (licence 99Eo414). ² L. Simpson, 'Viking burials in Dublin: is this the *longphort*?' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 11–62; L. Simpson, 'Archaeological excavation of a site bounded by nos 42–50 and 52–7 South Great George's Street and nos 58–67 Stephen Street Upper' (unpublished report submitted to the former Dúchas, now the National Monuments and Architectural Protection Division, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and the NMI, 1998).



7.1 Medieval Dublin, ninth to twelfth century.

The cluster of skeletons generated great interest since it was immediately apparent that they were not native Irish, but instantly identifiable as Viking by their mode of burial. Furnished burials of this type are exclusive to the Scandinavians and this appears to have been a high-status form of interment, although not confined to young males or even necessarily 'warriors', since females – presumably of similar aristocratic status – are well represented in the field, as are older men.³ What is known is that this type of burial was in use for most of the first millennium, peaking in popularity in Scandinavia during the ninth century. The males found at South Great George's Street are likely to have formed part of the widespread phenomenon of Viking invasion that began in Ireland in the late eighth century and that is traditionally said to have ended at the Battle of Clontarf when Brian Bórama, the high-king of Ireland, defeated the 'Foreigners' in 1014.⁴ The pool site represented the final resting place of this

3 S. Harrison, 'Academic review' in S. Harrison, 'Woodstown 6, supplementary research project' (unpublished report by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, on behalf the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007), p. 33. 4 S. Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013); A. MacShamhráin, *The Vikings: an illustrated history* (Dublin, 2002).



7.2 Site location at South Great George's Street, Dublin.

group of warriors, the radiocarbon determinations suggesting that their deaths occurred early in the invasion phase, in the first half of the ninth century.

But the Vikings were not the first to settle in the Poddle valley. The pool is likely to have been the origin of the place-name *Dubhlinn* ('black pool') obliquely referred to in the documentary sources by a mention of an *abbas Duiblinne* ('abbot of Dubhlinn') in 656 (= 650) and in 790, obviously an indication of the presence of a monastery here. But the alternative Gaelic place-name associated with Dublin – *Áth Cliath* – is recorded as early as 770 in relation to a ford across the Liffey, indicating that, to begin with, *Dubhlinn* and *Áth Cliath* were separate topographical entities and possibly even distinct settlements.⁵ By the mid-840s,

⁵ H.B. Clarke, *Dublin, part 1, to 1610* (Dublin, 2002), pp 2, 11; S. Duffy, 'General political

however, the contemporary monastic annalists were using the place-names interchangeably when describing the Vikings and their settlement, an indication that, even by this date, the Viking occupation of the lower Liffey was extensive enough to have encompassed both earlier topographical features (that is, the pool area and the ford area).

THE VIKINGS AT DUBLIN

The identification of ninth-century deposits that could be securely associated with the raiding Vikings at the black pool was particularly interesting since this is a period of Dublin's history about which little is known archaeologically, despite extensive excavations in and around the heart of the medieval city.⁶ The documentary sources from Ireland, however, paint a very different picture. The contemporary annalists view with horror the onslaught of the Vikings, their vivid and frightening descriptions recording large numbers of warriors pouring into Dublin at this date, intent on plunder. They provide a vital window on to an invading people who left no literary evidence themselves, with which to enable us to chart their early activities in Ireland and the Irish Sea region.⁷

While initially the Viking campaigns were confined to the 'raiding season' during the summer months, they soon began to establish what Irish sources call *longphuirt* ('ship camps'), including one at Dublin that is likely to have been very substantial in size, capable of housing a significant population.⁸ This *longphort*

narrative' in G. Scally, 'Archaeological excavation at nos 33–34 Parliament Street/Exchange Street Upper' (unpublished report submitted to Dúchas and the NMI, 1996), p. 1. 6 P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Viking Dublin' in H.B. Clarke and A. Simms (eds), *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the ninth to the thirteenth century*, 2 pts (Oxford, 1985), i, pp 103–45; R. Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 2004); D. Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea* (Stroud, 2010); L. Simpson, *Director's findings: Temple Bar West* (Dublin, 1999); L. Simpson, 'Forty years a-digging: a preliminary synthesis of archaeological investigations in medieval Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin I: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 1999* (Dublin, 2000), pp 11–68; L. Simpson, 'Pre-Viking and early Viking-Age Dublin: research questions' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin X: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2008* (Dublin, 2010), pp 49–92; L. Simpson, 'The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: archaeological evidence from Dublin' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 418–29; L. Simpson, 'The archaeological remains of Viking and medieval Dublin: a research framework' (unpublished Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research project, for Dublin City Council and the Heritage Council, 2010) available at www.heritagecouncil.ie; L. Simpson, 'Fifty years a-digging: a synthesis of medieval archaeological investigations in Dublin city and the suburbs' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2009* (Dublin, 2011), pp 9–112. 7 C. Downham, 'Viking camps in ninth-century Ireland: sources, locations and interactions' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin X*, pp 93–125. 8 L. Simpson

figures very prominently in the annalistic accounts and was evidently a major base, perhaps seasonal at the early stages but permanent after 841 when the occupants stayed through the winter. The population probably fluctuated greatly and is difficult to estimate at any given time, but the recorded deaths of those slain in battle during various campaigns around the country suggest that, in 847 alone, Dublin lost at least one thousand men.⁹ Even allowing for exaggeration (should we, say, halve that number to get the real figure?), this is a staggering casualty-count and, because it did not wipe out the *longphort* as a military stronghold, suggests that there were similar numbers of warriors in reserve in Dublin at year's end, along with the non-warrior population or camp followers, including women and possibly children.

In addition to the warriors there was the human cargo – the hostages and people destined for servitude – who had been captured in Ireland and the Irish Sea region and brought to Dublin to be traded.¹⁰ The potential numbers of this section of the population are also difficult to calculate, but a graphic reference in 871 records that two hundred slave-ships arrived in Dublin from Scotland filled with 'Angles, Britons and Picts', which gives some indication of potential numbers.¹¹ While such large numbers of both warriors and slaves are presumed to be somewhat exaggerated, the discovery and partial investigation of the ground-breaking Viking camp at Woodstown, Co. Waterford (c.800–1000), allows us at least to imagine how such a large population might have been manageable: the enclosure alone is just under half a kilometre in length by at least 120m in width and occupation also occurred outside the enclosure.¹² Furthermore, while the size of the monument at Woodstown might suggest a transitory camp for the short-term handling of large influxes of people, the artefacts (208 weights alone) indicate that it was a vibrant hub of trading activity, while the remains in the ground reveal a strong industrial function in the form of iron-working, along with evidence of silver-, amber- and woodworking and the repair or breaking up

'The *longphort* of Dublin: lessons from Woodstown, Co. Waterford, and Annagassan, Co. Louth' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2010* (Dublin, 2012), pp 94–112. For *longphuirt* generally, see E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow', *Archaeology Ireland*, 9:3 (1995), 30–2; E.P. Kelly and E. O'Donovan, 'A Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard, Co. Clare', *Archaeology Ireland*, 12:4 (1998), 13–16; J. Sheehan, 'The *longphort* in Viking-Age Ireland', *Acta Archaeologica*, 79 (2008), 282–95. ⁹ Duffy, 'Political narrative', p. 3; S. Duffy, 'Historical background' in M. Gowen with G. Scally, *A summary report on excavations at Exchange Street Upper/Parliament Street, Dublin* (Dublin, 1999), pp 4–9. ¹⁰ C. Downham, 'The Viking slave trade', *History Ireland*, 17:3 (2009), 15–17; P. Holm, 'The slave trade of Dublin: ninth to the twelfth centuries', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 317–45. ¹¹ Duffy, 'Political narrative', p. 3. ¹² I. Russell, 'N25 Waterford bypass, archaeological excavation of Woodstown 6' (unpublished report by Archaeological Consultancy Services, Sept. 2003); R. O'Brien and I. Russell, 'The Hiberno-Scandinavian site of Woodstown 6, Co. Waterford' in J. O'Sullivan and M. Stanley (eds), *Recent archaeological discoveries on the national road scheme, 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 111–29; Harrison, 'Woodstown 6', pp 3–47.

of ships.¹³ Thus, the *longphuirt* were not just military camps or even trading bases, but were manufacturing centres also. This evidence adds significantly to our understanding of how at least some of these *longphuirt* worked, including no doubt Dublin, which made the successful transition from a temporary camp to a commercial and manufacturing settlement.

But this very permanency provided a fixed target for reciprocal aggression and, after 841, the Vikings in Dublin could no longer remain aloof from or uninvolved in the Irish political scene. They were quick to exploit their changing circumstances, however, rebranding themselves as mercenaries and political allies, the success of this career-move being highlighted by the numerous appearances of the 'Foreigners of Dublin' in the annalistic records of the period.¹⁴ Their motives were probably not so dissimilar from those of the local kings for whom they worked: they were fighting to retain their land at the mouth of the Liffey. That their hold in those early years was relatively insecure was dramatically highlighted in 849, when Máel Sechnaill, head of the Southern Uí Néill and king of Tara, comprehensively destroyed the developing settlement, setting in train a chain of events that saw their 'expulsion' from Dublin in 902.¹⁵ While the settlement struggled on in the absence of Dublin's ruling elite (as is evident from the unbroken occupation levels at Temple Bar West),¹⁶ in 917 they returned with new vigour and this time they constructed a defended settlement that secured their position as rulers of Dublin.

VIKINGS IN THE PODDLE VALLEY

The discovery of ninth-century settlement in the Poddle valley was something of a surprise, since the site of the tenth-century Viking stronghold lay some distance away, on a prominent natural ridge to the north of the pool. This high ground was naturally defended – an obvious choice since it was flanked on the southern and eastern sides by the Poddle and on the northern side by the Liffey (fig. 7.1).¹⁷ The defensive aspect was considerably enhanced by the construction of enclosing earthen and timber defences in the early to mid-tenth century, which created a formidable stronghold measuring approximately 300m in diameter. The importance and wealth of this trading port have been well attested through the extensive archaeological excavations carried out within the historic core at Dublin, where remarkably well-preserved organic deposits survive, in some places over 4m in depth.¹⁸

13 Harrison, 'Woodstown 6', pp 36–8. 14 Downham, 'Viking camps in ninth-century Ireland', pp 116–17; H.B. Clarke, 'The bloodied eagle: the Vikings and the early development of Dublin', *Irish Sword*, 18 (1990–2), 91–119. 15 Duffy, 'Political narrative', pp 5–6. 16 Simpson, *Director's findings*, p. 27. 17 Simpson, 'Research questions', pp 73–5.

The site of the first settlement

The site excavated at South Great George's Street, by way of contrast, lay to the south of this ridge, in a low-lying valley that was physically cut off by the Poddle from the elevated ridge – a somewhat unexpected location for early occupation levels (pl. 4). Nevertheless, topography may actually have been the primary factor in choosing this site. The pool, with direct access to the sea, is likely to have been a major attraction, not just for mooring purposes, but also as a place where ships could be brought ashore. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. In fact, an area selected for geophysical and archaeological investigation at Annagassan, Co. Louth, which successfully confirmed the site of the *longphort* of Linn Duachaill, was chosen solely by sailing up the river and identifying the first possible landing point.¹⁹ The rising ground to the north of the pool at Dublin probably militated against the docking of ships there, making the southern side, with the ground falling away to the south, a more practical option.

A second explanation may be found in the fact that the early Christian monastery of Dubhlinn is likely to have been somewhere in this low-lying valley, on the banks of the pool. Here the Vikings found on their arrival an existing settlement at the mouth of a major river, which must have had significant infrastructure in the form of people, roads, buildings, trading routes and stores of food. In addition, this site evidently had a hinterland that was developed enough to supply the means to survive throughout the winter and also boasted direct access to the sea, with the naturally sheltered pool where ships could be moored throughout the winter. Most importantly from a political point of view, it was located on the boundary between two neighbouring provincial kingdoms – Brega (Southern Uí Neill) and Leinster (Laigin) – where differences between ruling Irish dynasties could be exploited to the full.²⁰

The Vikings made clear their intentions in 841 when they over-wintered at Dubhlinn for the first time at what had previously been their seasonal raiding camp and the settlement is likely to have expanded significantly after that. By the late ninth century, there was concentrated habitation farther north on the ridge, at the confluence of the Poddle and the Liffey, suggesting an emphasis on the Liffey frontage by this date. In this short space of time, what had been small-scale occupation of the banks of the pool developed into a defended fortress on a high ridge overlooking the Liffey, on course to becoming the great Viking emporium of Dublin, one of the most successful trading ports of the Viking world.

The four graves at South Great George's Street were the remains of some of the thousands of young Viking men whose presence is documented along the east coast of Ireland from the late eighth century onwards, their primary motive

18 Wallace, 'Viking Dublin'; Simpson, *Director's findings*. 19 E.P. Kelly, pers. comm.; see www.linnduachaill.ie. 20 S. Duffy (ed.), *Atlas of Irish history* (Dublin, 1997), p. 19 for map.

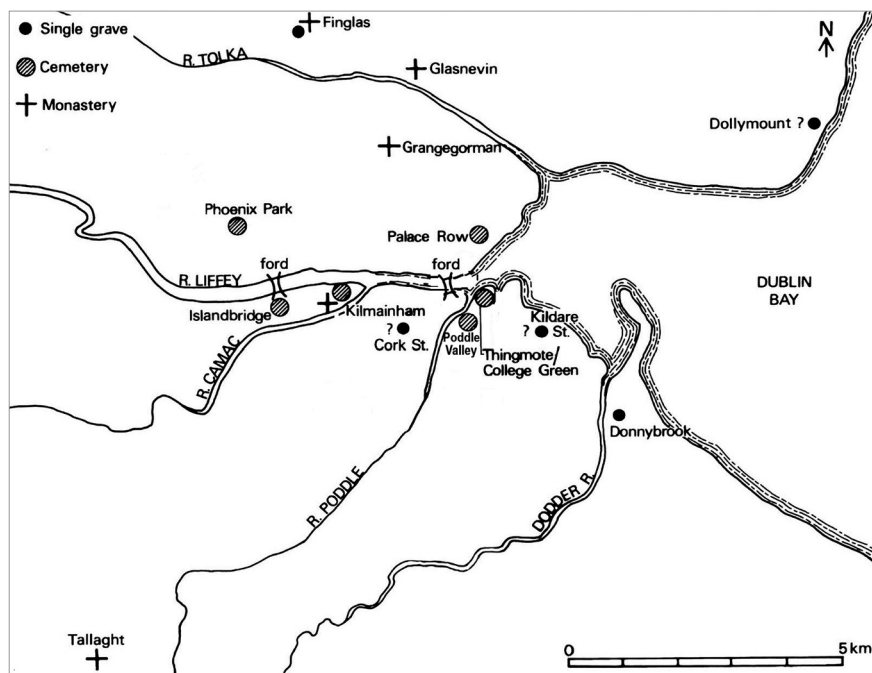
being to raid, plunder and perhaps conquer (fig. 7.1). They were well rewarded, given the quantities of valuable ecclesiastical metalwork circulating in the country, but they were also after slaves, as already mentioned, the Irish men, women and children who were carried off to be sold. But in this instance, the males at South Great George's Street were perhaps themselves casualties of war, as is suggested by their youth at the time death and the fact that they were buried with their equipment. Were they killed as a group on campaign and brought back to Dublin for burial or perhaps killed at Dublin itself, defending it against Máel Sechnaill in 849 (or on another occasion undocumented in the annals)? Alternatively, they may have been killed or died separately and buried one by one over a period of time, in what must have been a high-status grave-field at the centre of Viking Dublin.

Ship Street and Golden Lane

Dublin is well known among scholars of the Viking period for producing Viking warrior burials, boasting one-fifth of all furnished Viking burials found in Britain and Ireland.²¹ Thus, when an archaeological investigation (in 2001) by the writer at Ship Street Great, in the Poddle valley, found the truncated remains of a skeleton with grave-goods, suspicions were immediately raised that this, too, was a Viking furnished burial (pl. 4). During monitoring works, the upper torso of a young male was found at boulder-clay level (dated to the ninth century) and complete with grave-goods (possibly worn around the neck), including a bead, a silver finger ring, a small twisted silver ring and a square piece of corroded iron. Significantly, part of a pattern-welded sword was also found, further suggesting his Scandinavian origin.

The find was deemed to be an 'individual warrior' Viking interment, one of three similar Viking burials found in the general vicinity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at Cork Street, Bride Street and Kildare Street, spread over a distance of 1.5km. Nevertheless, it was noted that the Great Ship Street warrior was only 150m from the Bride Street burial found in 1860, the latter most likely a warrior since the skeleton was accompanied by a sword, spearhead and shield boss.²² The juxtaposition of the graves raised suspicions that this area formed part of a linear grave-field, with a strong possibility of other warrior burials surviving in the general vicinity. When the South Great George's Street block came up for excavation, this was factored into the research strategy for the site, resulting in a planning requirement specifying excavation of the entire site.²³ The result was that four new Viking furnished warrior burials were revealed, confirming a cluster of burials on the southern bank of the pool.

21 Seventy-seven burials in total (S. Harrison, 'Bride Street revisited: Viking burial in Dublin and beyond' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin X*, p. 127). 22 Ibid., pp 120–30. 23 In conjunction with the late Dáire O'Rourke, then Dublin City Archaeologist.



7.3 Viking furnished burials in the Liffey valley.

Since then, excavations in 2005 at Golden Lane, at the church site of St Michael le Pole (next door to the Great Ship Street site and 150m west of South Great George's Street), have resulted in a further two (possibly four) Viking burials being added to the record, one of which was a furnished female burial (fig. 7.1).²⁴ While the stone church itself was dated to c. 1100, the lowest levels of the cemetery were dated to the early Christian period and therefore, by date alone, are likely to have been associated with the monastic settlement of Dubhlinn somewhere in the vicinity.²⁵ The Viking graves at Golden Lane were found close to, but not within, the main cluster of burials between 10m and 30m away. This placing is suggestive and could indicate that, even in this early conquering stage, the Vikings deliberately buried their dead within this known sacred area, perhaps choosing it because it was a traditional burial place.

Hoggen Green

There were other clusters of burials at Dublin, the most relevant lying east of the Poddle valley and preserved in the place-name Hoggen Green, now College

²⁴ E. O'Donovan, 'The Irish, the Vikings and the English: new archaeological evidence from excavations at Golden Lane, Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VIII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2006* (Dublin, 2008), pp 36–130. ²⁵ Simpson,

Green (fig. 7.1).²⁶ This word is derived from the Old Norse word *haugr*, meaning burial mound, and at least two mounds are recorded as still in existence in the seventeenth century,²⁷ the presence of warriors being indicated by four furnished graves with weaponry found in the early twentieth century at Foster Place/Arcade.²⁸ While this appears to be a discrete burial area, the discovery of the Poddle group 390m to the west may suggest that they should be viewed as a continuation of this group, the burials being spread out along the south bank of the Liffey in a similar arrangement to the cemeteries at Kilmainham and Islandbridge upstream (see below).

Whatever the relationship between the Poddle valley and College Green group, both clusters must be viewed in the context of a much wider Viking burial landscape, comprising both individual burials and possible cemeteries, scattered all along the Liffey valley on both sides of the river (fig. 7.3). The most impressive are the extraordinary concentrations 2km upstream from the Poddle confluence, at Islandbridge and farther west at Kilmainham, which produced a total of fifty-two Viking warriors between them, spread out over a distance of 1.2km.²⁹ Thus, on the southern side of the Liffey alone, the Viking warrior burials at Dublin can be charted over a distance of almost 4km, extending from Kildare Street in the east to the Memorial Park at Islandbridge in the west.

THE VIKING WARRIORS AT SOUTH GREAT GEORGE'S STREET

South Great George's Street is a route of some antiquity, which curves around the south-eastern suburb of the medieval walled town (fig. 7.1). The excavation site was very large, measuring approximately 100 by 60m and encompassing a total of twenty-one properties and their rear gardens. As mentioned previously, the planning permission carried a requirement for 100 per cent excavation, since the site was within the zone of archaeological potential for Dublin and was close to the Dubhlinn or black pool, flagged as the site of the monastery of Dublin. In general, the deposits in the gardens and yards were approximately 3m in depth, while the layers along the street frontages were completely removed by deep cellars – a common occurrence in Dublin. The Viking deposits, however, were not deep (averaging 0.2m), with most of the evidence surviving at boulder-clay

'Research questions', pp 17–20. ²⁶ Ibid., pp 49–92. ²⁷ Ibid., pp 66–7. ²⁸ S. Harrison, 'The Suffolk Street sword: further notes on the College Green cemetery' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 136–44. ²⁹ Harrison, 'Bride Street revisited', p. 127; R. Ó Floinn, 'The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 132–65; E. O'Brien, 'A reconsideration of the location and context of Viking burials at Kilmainham/Islandbridge, Dublin' in C. Manning (ed.), *Dublin and beyond the Pale: studies in honour of Paddy Healy* (Bray, 1998), pp 35–44; S.H. Harrison, 'Viking graves and grave-goods in Ireland' in A.-C. Larson (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 61–75; Simpson, 'Research questions', pp 62–72.

level. These early deposits, dating from the ninth to tenth centuries, were sealed by continuous medieval clays up to a depth of 1m and contained pottery dating from the late twelfth century onwards. There was little evidence for activity in this clay, suggesting that the area was under cultivation for most of the medieval period.

At the lowest levels of the excavation, the remains of a small river and pool were located, which fed into the full pool on the northern side. The higher ground to the east of the watercourse/pool was found to have been delineated by two successive palisades, a small ditch and finally a bank. East of this man-made barrier, however, were the remains of occupied ground in the form of hearths, pits, post-holes, kiln/fire-burning deposits, along with organic waste, including animal bones and shells.

In and among the settlement features four graves were found within an area measuring roughly 25m², only one of which – the subject of this essay – was relatively well preserved. All were examined in detail by an osteoarchaeologist, Laureen Buckley, who established that they were a group of young, strong males, three of whom were under 25 years old, the fourth probably aged between 25 and 29 (F196).³⁰ The first truncated skeleton (F196) had a circular iron object on its chest, which was identified immediately as a shield boss, and a second object, a dagger, was then found under the left hip (pls 5, 6). When the skeleton was formally identified as that of a young adult male, the suspicion was that it was a Viking warrior burial, similar to the Great Ship Street burial mentioned previously. The conical shield boss (pl. 5) has been identified as an early type, forming part of a small group classified as the Irish Sea A group (as opposed to the ‘Dublin type’), which displays Anglo-Saxon rather than Scandinavian influences dated to the ninth century.³¹ Similar examples have been found at Ormside in Cumbria, at Cronk Moar in the Isle of Man and at Millhill in Scotland, the latter probably the closest parallel.³²

A second discovery followed, but this skeleton (F223) was unfortunately in a worse condition and lay on a hearth or fire, although evidently placed there post-mortem since it was not burnt. Despite the truncation, the skeleton was identified as a young adult male, who is also likely to have been buried with a shield, since a fragment of metal was found (F223:1) on his chest, which was folded and twisted, possibly as part of a pre-burial ritual that rendered it unusable.³³ The third burial (F343) was almost completely destroyed, apart from the lower legs, but enough survived to suggest that this was also a strong young adult male, the date confirming that he formed part of the Viking group.

30 L. Buckley, ‘Skeletal report’ in Simpson, ‘Excavations at South Great George’s Street’, pp 363–8. 31 Stephen Harrison, pers. comm. 32 S. Harrison, ‘The Millhill burial in context: artifact, culture and chronology in the Viking west’, *Acta Archaeologica*, 71 (2000), 67–9. This site was long thought to be very early, pre-dating 800 on the basis of the artefacts. This has since been redated to the ninth century (ibid.). 33 Stephen Harrison, pers. comm.

THE VIKING WARRIOR

The fourth and final skeleton (F598) was in better condition and this individual has produced some very interesting and exciting data, which do much to further our understanding of this enigmatic group of young men (pls 6, 7). While no weapons were found with the burial, it was furnished with personal items (see below) and the remains, by age and sex, were deemed likely to have formed part of the group of young men already discovered. He was a strong adult male, aged between 17 and 25 years, and was buried in a supine flexed position, his grave having been cut into an existing ditch or gully in an area that had been occupied previously. The first impression was that he was a striking individual, even in death, suggested by his size and the weight of his bones, which were big and heavy. This Viking was in the prime of life, standing 176cm (5ft 7 in.) and, while this is not tall by modern standards, he was certainly taller than his companions, the average stature of whom was 171cm. He was physically powerful and Buckley noted that he was very muscular, especially around the shoulders where there were strong insertions for the ligaments and muscles. These muscles are involved in vigorous upper arm movements such as axial rotation or swinging movements – perhaps, as Buckley suggests, those used in battle situations. He was right-handed with a well-developed right arm and there was evidence of strong muscles at the head of the femurs – very important in the ‘stability of the knee joint’, particularly when it is kept in the locked position.³⁴ There was evidence of strain, perhaps caused by this individual trying to stand firm to hold his ground, which may have occurred in a ‘conflict situation’.³⁵ The upper body was also strong, no doubt strengthened considerably by the vigorous rowing that would have been required of all warriors on their voyages to and around Ireland.

Mode of burial

The body was orientated north-east–south–west with the head to the south–west and the hands tucked under the chin. The right arm had been flexed and the lower arm lay over the left humerus or upper arm. Although the skeleton was largely intact, the skull, part of the left arm and part of the lower legs were missing and there was evidence of disturbance in the chest area. When the content of the grave fill was sieved, this disturbance was confirmed by the recovery of additional fragments of human bones from the body, including part of the skull, teeth, ribs, feet and hands – an indication that this disturbance had occurred on site, post-burial. Other human bones were found in and around the grave site, suggesting that there had been continual burial (possibly not formal) in this general location but that evidence for it was very slight.³⁶ These included two fragments of bone (a right ischium and a rib bone) from a juvenile less than

³⁴ Buckley, ‘Skeletal report’, p. 365. ³⁵ Ibid. ³⁶ These were from Level 4; the Viking burials were found in Level 2 (Simpson, ‘Excavations at South Great George’s Street’, p. 119).

14 years old and the proximal end of a left femur, probably that from a young male. Part of the left arm (ulna) and some finger bones were also recovered from the environmental test trench in this location, possibly from the young male.

The arrangement of the lower part of the skeleton suggests that the legs had been moved shortly after burial. Although the lower limbs were flexed when found, originally they appear to have been fully extended since part of the left lower leg, the fibula, was still in position, evidently left behind when the legs were moved (pls 6, 7). This movement must have occurred when the limbs still had flesh and sinews attached in the knee area since, when the legs were moved, the knee-cap or patella (which is attached only by muscle) was still in position, which would not have occurred if the flesh had rotted away. The heads of the femurs were also slightly out of alignment from the hip socket, suggesting decay of muscle and sinew in this same location.

The absence of military weaponry, and the combination of the disturbance of the chest cavity and the fact that the legs had clearly been moved soon after death, raise the possibility that the grave was robbed after burial. Were the legs moved out of the way in the search for a sword and the chest cavity disturbed in search of a shield? If it is the case that this disturbance occurred not long after death, it raises questions about the security of the grave-field and, as a result, the date of burial. Assuming that it was the Irish and not fellow Vikings who were responsible for robbing the grave, this suggests that the burial and subsequent grave-robbing happened before a secure settlement was established in Dublin in 841. Were the men buried at a seasonal camp in hostile territory, which was then plundered by local Irish when they left? An alternative is suggested by the presence of additional (very limited) skeletal material in and around the grave, which may imply that burial continued at the grave site. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the disturbance was confined to the chest area and additional human bones were not much represented, either here or elsewhere on site, as one might expect if this area was a graveyard that continued in use for some time.

Information from the skeleton

Unfortunately the skeleton did not reveal the cause of death, although the suspicion is that the man died violently, being one of a group of young, well-armed Vikings who all appear to have died prematurely in a foreign land. In one of the other burials (F196) the right arm may have been severed and deposited with the corpse, suggesting that this individual at least had died in a conflict situation. While the subject of this essay might, of course, have died of natural causes, there was also no evidence of chronic infection or any degenerative diseases, apart from some minor compression of the vertebrae in the lower back (see below). In general, then, he appears to have been a healthy young man until his death, as is also suggested by the lack of wear and tear on his teeth (apart from some chipped enamel and exposed dentine). The only clue to his cause of

death is the context of the burial – the fact he was a young male Scandinavian in Ireland in the early ninth century at a time when the historical sources confirm that the country was under sustained attack.

Yet the bones did give up other secrets. Despite the fact that he was young, this individual had schmorl's nodes in his lower spine,³⁷ which are consistent with general wear and tear on the back, usually found in older people or individuals who have carried out significant physical labour during their childhood when their bones are still soft. He also had slight scoliosis and compression of the vertebrae, which is again consistent with heavy lifting and hard work. This man, then, was exposed to strenuous physical activity from an early age, laying the foundation for later back problems that were only beginning to manifest themselves at the time of his death. This heavy work is likely to relate to his early childhood working the land, an activity that probably remained a constant in the lives of these young men since they came to Ireland only in the summer raiding season. This was probably followed by years as part of a rowing crew on a Viking longship in his early teens. Thus, even though his mode of burial suggests that he was at the higher end of the social scale, he still had to work hard for his living – an indication of the harsh conditions for Scandinavian children at this time.

Buckley also noticed that this individual had a congenital defect in his lower spine, which involved an extra sacral vertebra. Instead of the usual five, he had six, the additional vertebra becoming incorporated and compressed into the sacrum on the right-hand side, causing a slight scoliosis or curvature of the spine. While this is a relatively common condition, it was particularly interesting in this instance because one of the other skeletons (F223) possibly had a similar congenital deformation of the sacrum. The similarities in the skeletons suggest that there was a genetic link between them, although it should be noted that the carbon-dating range is significantly wider for this skeleton than for the other one (F223; see below). This would not exclude the possibility, however, that they were kinsmen who had travelled together as part of a large army, which ended in death for both men.

Scientific data

While the mode of burial and the accompanying grave-goods provided a general date range of the ninth and early tenth centuries for the warriors, radiocarbon dating was also carried out as a scientific test to confirm this, but with some surprising results.³⁸ For this burial, the test returned a very wide date range, a 95 per cent probability of his death occurring between 786 and 955, with an intercept date of 885, and a 68 per cent probability that it occurred between 859

³⁷ Schmorl's nodes are small bumps of vertebral disk tissue that bulge through the end of weakened vertebrae. ³⁸ The samples were sent to Beta Analytic radiocarbon dating laboratory in Miami, Florida, and Queen's University Belfast.

and 893. On the other hand, his three companions produced a much earlier date range, spanning the period from the late seventh to the late ninth century, but with very early intercept dates ranging from 770 to 782.³⁹

If this warrior was part of this group, which is likely but not certain, then the early end of the 95 per cent probability range may be applicable; if he is later, within the 68 per cent probability, it confirms that the Poddle valley was a grave-field that serviced the *longphort* and was in use for at least fifty years from 841, if not longer, while the settlement on the ridge developed.⁴⁰ That said, the dates for the other warriors seem impossibly early and difficult to reconcile with the available historical and archaeological sources. Nevertheless, while one must be cautious when using radiocarbon determinations, as has been discussed elsewhere,⁴¹ the consistent early dates cannot be dismissed entirely, especially since they are supported by three additional dates from two other sites.⁴² One course might be to suggest that the men died towards the first half of the ninth century, around the time when Vikings set up the base in Dublin recorded in the annals at 841.⁴³ Even this conservative strategy, however, is not without its problems and causes difficulties with the second scientific process carried out on the bones and teeth – isotope analysis.⁴⁴

Isotope oxygen values are related directly to the rain and ground-water one drinks during one's lifetime and, since values differ across Europe, this can help to pinpoint the general location where an individual is likely to have grown up or lived. Generally, the higher the negative values, the farther away from the Atlantic the individual is likely to have been reared. The process involved the establishment of base isotope values for the South Great George's Street site for comparative purposes – in this instance from a young cow and a horse – and these produced values of -7.9 and -7.4 respectively. The results were somewhat surprising, if mixed. The warrior and one of the other skeletons (burial F223

³⁹ F196 had a 95% probability of dating to between 670 and 880 (68% probability of dating to between 690 and 790; intercept 770); F223 had a 95% probability of dating to between 670 and 880 (68% probability of dating between 690 and 790; intercept 770) and F342 had a 95% probability of dating to between 689 and 882 (68% probability of dating between 771 and 851; intercept 770). See also Simpson, 'Viking burials in Dublin', pp 38–45. ⁴⁰ The burials are impossible to link stratigraphically, since they survive as independent cut features in the boulder clay and are mostly sealed by later medieval and post-medieval soils. ⁴¹ For the 'marine reservoir effect', see Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea*, p. 76. ⁴² Great Ship Street produced a 94.5% probability of dating to between 665 and 885 (68% probability of dating to between 680 and 775; intercept 790) (Simpson, 'Viking burial in Dublin', p. 34); Golden Lane produced a 94.5% probability of dating to between 678 and 869, and 680 to 870 (O'Donovan, 'Excavations at Golden Lane', p. 53). ⁴³ Simpson, 'Excavations at South Great George's Street', p. 50; Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea*, pp 76–7. ⁴⁴ This was carried out by Vaughan Grimes and Janet Montgomery at the Isotope Laboratory of the University of Bradford in 2004, for Atlantic Productions (Simpson, 'Excavations at South Great George's Street', appendix 3, pp 790–3).

with whom he shared a congenital deformity) produced isotope values of -11.2 (bone) and -13.8 (tooth), and -10.14 (tooth) respectively, which is generally consistent with the ranges for Scandinavia. The subject of this essay, then, is likely to have been born and raised in the Viking homelands, as one would expect at this early date, as was his possible kinsman, F233.

Nevertheless, a surprise came with the values received for the other two Viking warriors (F196 and F342), which, at -7.7 and -7.4 , suggest they were raised somewhere significantly closer to the Atlantic seaboard, within the isotope ranges for Ireland and Scotland. These men were evidently reared in one of the Viking colonies, the radiocarbon determinations suggesting that they were first-generation colonists, born either in Dublin or in one of the other Atlantic colonies such as the Western Isles or Northern Isles of Scotland.⁴⁵ In the past, these colonies were thought to have been founded around 800, based solely on the evidence of chronicle accounts of raids at this date, but more recent debate has revised this to the mid-ninth century for actual migration and settlement.⁴⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin advocates an early date, suggesting that the recorded raids along the west coast of Ireland in the 830s were carried out by Vikings based in what is now Scotland, who had arguably already founded colonies between 812 and 820 when there is a silence in the sources regarding their movements elsewhere.⁴⁷ If the young warriors were born in the colonies within this timeframe, it would suggest that their deaths at Dublin occurred at the earliest between 829 and 837 (born *c.* 810–20), which is closer to the early sequence proposed by the radiocarbon determinations. Conversely, if they were reared in Dublin, they were presumably born after the ship-camp was established in 841, dying, at the earliest, in the late 850s; that is to say, later in the proposed sequence. These data may throw a new light on the very first stage of Viking activity, the so-called ‘hit and run’ phase, the scientific technology at least prompting questions about the dating sequences proposed for those early years, especially in conjunction with the Irish annalistic sources.

What the isotope analysis does tell us, however, is that this small group of just four men were of mixed geographical origin, providing a powerful insight into the dynamics of one of the most successful aspects of the Viking invasions, the sheer numbers of men. These warriors appear to have been representatives of a consortium of communities, rather than members of an army mustered from a single place. While these gatherings may have been based on familial or political connections, it may have been the case that entrepreneurial Viking warlords frequented both Scandinavia and the Insular Viking zone, enlisting these young

⁴⁵ It should be noted that the boss found with F196 was an early Irish Sea A type similar to the Millhill example, which was originally dated to *c.* 800 but redated to the mid-ninth century (Harrison, ‘Millhill burial’, 71). ⁴⁶ J.H. Barrett, ‘The Norse in Scotland’ in S. Brink and N. Price (eds), *The Viking world* (Abington, 2008), p. 419. ⁴⁷ D. Ó Corráin, ‘The Vikings and Ireland’ in Brink and Price (eds), *Viking world*, pp 428–33.

men as raiding became more intense, eventually forming the massive armies that are recorded as flooding into Dublin.

The personal possessions

When it comes to identifying with this individual, the closest one can get to his 'personality' is through his personal possessions – the items he presumably valued or habitually wore until his death. Surprisingly, and disappointingly as mentioned previously, no weapons were found despite the fact that the skeleton was relatively undisturbed apart from the chest and head area. It is possible, however, that he originally had a shield on his chest since sieving of the disturbed deposits in the cavity area produced a small non-ferrous metal artefact (99E414:619:4) that was hour-glass shaped and may have been from a shield boss, although it may equally have been some sort of decorative mount.⁴⁸ A knife is suggested by the presence of what might be a metal blade (99E414:619:1) in the disturbed area, although again this is not certain. Finally, what may have been two small metal beads were also found, the identification of which is not certain (99E414:619:3 and 99E414:619:5).

Whatever the fate of the militaristic grave-goods, several personal items did survive, originally placed in and about the clothing. The most striking was a well-preserved antler comb (9E414: 598:2) that was found nestling in the crook of the right shoulder (pls 8–10).⁴⁹ Antler is a very sturdy medium, often used for combs of this period, many of them almost identical and made to specific designs that can be found all over the Viking world. This has prompted suggestions that they were the products of itinerant craftsmen travelling from settlement to settlement.⁵⁰

The comb is a single-sided, composite exemplar, the entire object measuring 178mm in length by 34mm in breadth by 11mm in depth. It has an arched spine with C-shaped side-plates that are held together by seven iron rivets. The teeth are individually sawn and are shorter at the comb end, leaving uncut antler on both end-plates. It is decorated with simple incised interlace along the side panels, one side being very badly degraded. This decoration is formed around a central band of vertical parallel lines, flanked by a diamond-shaped incision on either side. These are infilled with criss-cross hatching on the top and the bottom, with additional vertical lines at either end of the comb.

Unusually, the incised lines still contained traces of a black substance, which was analysed at the State Laboratories in Abbotstown in an attempt to identify it. The comb was subjected to an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) test, which noted a

⁴⁸ It measured 5mm in length by 2.5mm in width in the middle, widening to 4mm at either end and may be of lead, which suggests it was a lead weight although this is not certain (Simpson, 'Excavations at South Great George's Street', p. 527). ⁴⁹ The comb was block-lifted in plaster and subsequently excavated (C. Daly, 'Beyond Valhalla: the conservation of a group of Viking grave-goods from Dublin' in Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI*, pp 73–6). ⁵⁰ H. Clarke and B. Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (rev. ed. London, 1995), p. 161.

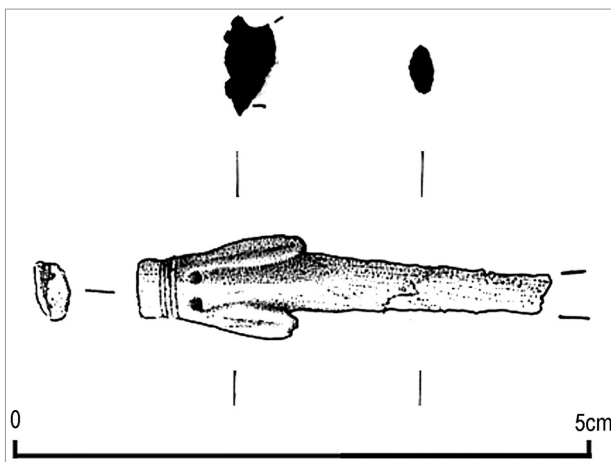
high copper peak in the sample,⁵¹ prompting a second analysis under a polarizing microscope. The results suggest that this substance is a pigment associated with the decoration rather than accidental staining arising from the burial conditions. Thus the decoration on this comb was deliberately painted, presumably to highlight the incised lines. The pigment might be some sort of carbon black, although this was by no means certain, the copper peak suggesting the presence of tenorite, a black oxide of copper.⁵²

While the staining of the incised lines provided new information about the decoration of these combs, the comb itself falls into a well-known type – Dunleavy's F1 or Ambrosiani's A3 – classified as composite, single-sided combs with a curved back.⁵³ The date range is consistent with the burials at South Great George's Street and an almost identical comb was found during excavations at Upper Exchange Street/Parliament Street where carbon dating of animal bone from the same context indicates a date range of between c.690 and 888.⁵⁴ Despite the fact that it may have been mass-produced to a set design, this comb was nevertheless a personal item that was in daily use until death, bringing us closer to the man behind the warrior. It was an ornate, high-status, everyday object, but was presumably a prized personal possession since it was carefully buried with him.

That the comb was deliberately placed on the corpse rather than just within his clothing when he died and subsequently buried is suggested by the fact that a second object (99E414:598:3) was found directly beneath it. This unidentified artefact is something of a puzzle, being of metal rather than bone, measuring 59mm in length by 25mm in breadth by 9mm in width (pls 10, 11). It appears to be mostly of corroded iron, although a central core of copper is clearly visible as distinctive green staining, suggesting immediately that it was originally a decorative and valuable possession. A detailed X-ray revealed that this object is, in fact, an elaborate piece composed of two plates of iron held together by three iron rivets. Each iron plate has a narrow strip of copper alloy, 3mm in width, which runs the length of the object and these are most likely to have been decorative, as is suggested by the fact that the iron rivets have individual copper-alloy caps. The object also has a porous off-white material attached to one side, initially thought to form part of the object, but when this was examined in Trinity College Dublin it was identified as calcite, which was probably the result of prolonged exposure to water rather than being part of the object itself.⁵⁵ Other

51 By Joe Foley, of the State Laboratory: see Daly, 'Beyond Valhalla', pp 74–5 for details of testing. 52 By Peter MacTaggart, State Laboratory: see *ibid.*, p. 74. 53 M. Dunleavy, 'A classification of early Irish combs', *PRIA*, 88C (1988), 362–3; K. Ambrosiani, *Viking-Age combs, comb making and comb makers in the light of finds from Birka and Ribe* (Stockholm, 1981), pp 15–19. 54 Gowen and Scally, *Summary report*, p. 11, pl. 7. 55 Martin Linne, of the Zoology Department, TCD, following examination by Scanning Electron Microscopy at Scientific Resources Ltd, TCD. See Daly, 'Beyond Valhalla', p. 76 for details.

7.4 Zoomorphic-headed bone pin (99E414:598:1).



organic material was noted adhering to the object and surprisingly this was identified as tiny fragments of oak.⁵⁶

The only hint of what this object may originally have been was from an iron knife blade that was found fused to one side of it (although in a non-functional way), suggesting that it originally was some sort of dagger or knife with an elaborate handle or cross-guard (pl. 10). It may even have been a pivoting knife, with a blade at either end that folded up into the handle, though this is difficult to establish. The blade (99E414:598:4) itself was relatively small, measuring 81mm in length by 15mm in width by 7mm in breadth. It was extremely fragile and had corroded badly, but enough survived to establish that it was triangular in section and was missing the tang (the part that goes into the handle).

Although the blade was found with the object, it may not have been associated with it and suggestions as to its function range from the mouth of a purse to part of a balance-scale, the latter very unlikely. The fragments of timber are difficult to explain, although there is evidence that swords were sometimes kept in timber sheaths, to prevent corrosion, and were then inserted into a leather scabbard. It is also the case that the oak fragments may have been from the shield, thought to have been sitting on the man's chest, from either the actual shield or the shield-grip; the almost intact boss found with another of the warriors (F196) likewise had fragments of oak attached to it.

The final object was a tiny and unusual zoomorphic-headed bone pin (99E414:598:1) found near the right shoulder. It measured 35mm in length, tapering from 3cm to 1cm in width (fig. 7.4). The find position suggests that it was used to secure an item of clothing, perhaps a light tunic, since the pin was relatively delicate. The comb and composite object, however, were also found in this location, indicating that they were deposited together. The pin shaft was

⁵⁶ Identification by Lorna O'Donnell. See *ibid.*, p. 76 for details.

damaged, but the head survived intact and was an attractive piece comprising a long-eared animal with a narrow snout and prominent ears – perhaps a hare.⁵⁷

The use of the object as a pin may have been secondary, since there are two irregular perforations, one under the snout and a second under the ears, just 5mm apart, the function of which is hard to establish as a pin. The edges of the perforations are highly polished, suggesting that something was rubbing against it, possibly metal rings, causing wear at these points. Part of the bone had been stripped down to the inner core and this may imply that the object was forcibly removed from the rings, perhaps snatched as part of the spoils of war.

It is not clear what the original function of this decorative object was and it is difficult to find parallels. Nevertheless, a cruder zoomorphic pin was found at the crannog site of Ballinderry I (1932:7789), Co. Westmeath, which was also a long-eared animal with a snout nose, probably part of a wooden drinking terminal.⁵⁸ Whatever its origin, the object was clearly important to the warrior since it was chosen as a grave-good, even if it was only for the functional reason of keeping his tunic closed. But it may be that the warrior kept using this little object, despite the fact that it was broken (since it was found in an undisturbed part of the skeleton), simply because he liked decorative and delicate things.

Final days

The sieving operations within the chest cavity also suggested two final but unconnected facts about this individual, the first probably relating to his final days. Close examination of the deposits revealed evidence of hammer-scale – the scale that forms on metal when it is heated and then bounces off when the iron is forged. This by-product is likely to have snagged in whatever garment the man was wearing when he was buried, indicating that he was at some stage either in the immediate vicinity of a forge or, more likely, engaged in the activity himself. That a Viking warrior could be carrying out such a specialized task is not particularly surprising, since this is one of the many exciting conclusions emerging from the Viking *longphort* site at Woodstown, Co. Waterford. As was mentioned above, archaeological investigations have demonstrated that this site was not simply a trading station – a gathering place for the exchange and trading of objects and people seized during raids – but was a fully-fledged trading locus, heavily involved in manufacturing. Ironworking or smithing was especially important⁵⁹ and was presumably carried out by some of the warriors themselves – a proficiency in this craft being evidently an asset in a society dominated by militaristic prowess involving weapons and a bullion currency.

The other find retrieved from the sieving operation in and around the burial was at the opposite end of the spectrum. The finger bones of a neonate, probably of thirty-six weeks' gestation, were found deep in the chest cavity, the depth

⁵⁷ Identification by Ruth Johnson. ⁵⁸ R. Johnson, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1: a reinterpretation', *PRIA*, 99C (1999), 61, pl. V. ⁵⁹ Harrison, 'Woodstown 6', pp 36–7.

raising the possibility they were buried with the warrior, although they may have represented a later burial entirely. The rest of the infant's skeleton was not found, probably because delicate bones tend not to survive as well as those of adults. Nevertheless, the presence of the finger bones is enough to indicate that there was an infant buried at this location, possibly even related to the male in some way.⁶⁰ While this is purely speculative, it does raise the possibility that this young man was in Dublin as part of a family unit at the time of his death.

After burial

The excavation also revealed what had happened to the warrior's body after burial. As was mentioned above, the fact that the legs were moved some time after death, before the rotting process had been completed, tells us there was some contemporary interference with the grave, although it is difficult to establish what this was. The disturbance noted in the chest cavity probably occurred in the pre-Anglo-Norman period, as is suggested by the finds and the general stratigraphy at this end of the site. This interference may have been related to grave-robbing – the theft of the shield and sword. This activity has been noted in other Viking graves in Scandinavia, where the body (or part of it) has been moved and items have been removed, not long after interment, presumably to access grave-goods. In some cases, various items were left behind.⁶¹

CONCLUSIONS

A significant amount of information was retrieved from the graves of these young men who came to Dublin to make their fortune, probably over 1,170 years ago, ending up in a grave-field on the banks of a pool at Dubhlinn. It is now known that the bands of warriors attacking Ireland included (and were probably mostly made up of) young adult males such as this man, aged between 17 and 29. Thus, by modern standards, they were already living full lives at this young age, involved in serious risk-taking that ultimately is likely to have contributed to their death. Their origins are not clear-cut, the armies containing not only two young men from Scandinavia but also the sons of men who had already emigrated, setting up colonies in the north Atlantic, perhaps in Dublin itself. Their weapons and high-status burial suggest they were from aristocratic or wealthy families, but they were no strangers to hard work and were engaged in physical exertion from early childhood, their strenuous physical activity leaving scars on their skeletons and laying the foundation for potential future health problems.

⁶⁰ Future scientific investigation, such as DNA testing, may help to establish whether there is a genetic link. ⁶¹ N. Price, 'Dying and the dead: Viking-Age mortuary behaviour' in Brink and Price (eds), *Viking world*, pp 269–70.

This warrior, in particular, brings to life the descriptions by the terrified monks, his large and heavy bones revealing that he must have been a fearsome opponent in battle. He was probably born in Norway towards the beginning of the ninth century and had had a strenuous childhood, working hard from an early age. He was physically fit and in good health, his death presumably premature given his age, but he is likely to have had many other skills needed for his profession – for example, a knowledge of smithing, which was very important for a man who depended on his weapons for his living and who was operating in a bullion-based economy.

On the personal side, this individual appears to have liked expensive and delicate objects, and these were deemed important enough to be buried with him, presumably having an emotional value for the family he may have had. His final resting place was with his fallen comrades, perhaps with a kinsman in the embryonic settlement of Dublin, which was to evolve into the capital of Ireland. Where he died is not known, whether at Dublin itself (which seems likely) or somewhere on campaign farther afield. We do know that his companions brought his corpse for burial to a place in which they had already invested heavily with their dead. The extensive spread of burials on both sides of the Liffey shows clearly that they intended Dublin to be far more than just a seasonal raiding camp, even at this early stage.

But despite the excitement that the discovery of this warrior and his companions generated in 2003, this was not the response that the man himself would have received in Ireland in the ninth century, one of many thousands who came to share in a bounty of plunder that included the people of Ireland. His actions and those of others turned the spiritual monastic settlement of Dubhlinn on the banks of the Liffey into one of the largest and most important slaving ports of the Viking world, a devastating transformation for the native Dubliners.⁶² These Viking warriors, then, dealt in human misery, developing the existing sporadic trade of people in Ireland into a large-scale industry and snatching not just young men or legitimate targets of battle for ransom but also women and children, destined for a life of confinement in one of the other colonies. Yet the reputation of the Vikings as swashbuckling hero figures means they are always likely to hold a special place in Irish history and discoveries such as that at South Great George's Street are guaranteed to generate great excitement.⁶³

⁶² Downham, 'Viking slave trade'; Holm, 'Slave trade of Dublin'; S. Brinks, 'Slavery in the Viking world' in Brink and Price (eds), *Viking world*, pp 49–56. ⁶³ The archaeological project, including the post-excavation phase, was funded fully by Dunnes Stores and this is gratefully acknowledged by the writer. The author would also like to thank Margaret Gowen for her continued support and Seán Duffy for commenting on the text.

The Ballinderry bow: an under-appreciated Viking weapon?

ANDY HALPIN

The yew-wood bow from Ballinderry crannog (no. 1), Co. Westmeath, has tended to be overshadowed by more spectacular finds from that site, such as the very fine sword and wooden gaming board. What is even less well understood is that this bow is perhaps the most definitively ‘Viking’ object from the site. Although known since 1932, the bow has never been the subject of a dedicated academic study, nor has a full description been published. This essay aims to redress this situation, while also highlighting the bow’s importance, both for military history and for the study of Irish–Scandinavian relations in the Viking period. In terms of military history, the bow is significant as a clear tenth-century example of a ‘longbow’, notwithstanding questions that arise about the meaning and usefulness of that term. The fact that it is indisputably a Viking weapon also raises many issues about the status of Ballinderry crannog and the general state of Irish–Viking interaction and exchanges in the tenth century.

The crannog site at Ballinderry (usually known as Ballinderry crannog, no. 1) was excavated in 1932 by the Harvard archaeological expedition in Ireland under the direction of Hugh O’Neill Hencken.¹ Among the many important finds from the site was a wooden bow, found in association with what Hencken called House 1.² While Hencken’s structural interpretation of the site has been questioned, his dating of this ‘primary house’ level to about the late tenth century has not been challenged.³ Hencken described the bow as being ‘firmly wedged among the timbers of the floor’ when found, with only ‘the damaged end ... slightly above the level of the surrounding logs’, which may suggest that the bow, once damaged and no longer functional, had been reused as a structural timber.⁴ This could indicate that the bow was somewhat older than its context, but the length of time involved is unlikely to be significant. A tenth-century date for the bow, therefore, seems likely.

Apart from the original publication by Hencken – which provided little detail in terms of either description or discussion – the bow has received little academic

1 H. O’Neill Hencken, ‘Ballinderry crannog no. 1’, *PRIA*, 43C (1935–7), 103–238. 2 *Ibid.*, 138–9; fig. 8, D. 3 See R. Johnson, ‘Ballinderry crannog no. 1: a reinterpretation’, *PRIA*, 99C (1999), 23–71 for discussion. 4 Such reuse was probably a common fate for redundant bows. A bow from Hiberno-Norse Waterford (E406:1698:1) ended its days as part of the wattle lining of a mid-twelfth-century pit at Peter Street/High Street/Cook Lane (A. Halpin,

attention. It was referred to (and illustrated) in 1963 in Clark's important paper on prehistoric archery in north-western Europe.⁵ Since then, there have been passing references in a number of histories of medieval archery (of varying academic value) and some more detailed – but often non-scholarly – discussion in papers in the British *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries*.⁶ After over eighty years, a full academic publication of this important artefact is long overdue (figs 8.1–8.3).

The bow (NMI, 1932:7252) is almost complete but is missing approximately 5cm from one end. It consists of a stave of yew (*Taxus baccata*) that is currently 185cm in length but was approximately 190cm in length originally. In cross-section the bow is roughly D-shaped, with a deeply rounded belly and flatter back (in traditional archery terminology, the back is the outer face of the bow, facing away from the archer, while the belly is the inner face, facing towards the archer) but the cross-section becomes more ovoid towards the tapered ends. The sides of the bow have clearly been flattened. The maximum width, near the middle, is 40mm and the maximum thickness 31mm. A distinction between the sapwood and heartwood of the yew is visible, with a relatively thin layer of lighter coloured sapwood occurring along the back of the bow, while the remainder consists of heartwood. The sapwood surface of the back displays a large number of cracks, mostly running transversely across the width of the bow. These cracks are noticeably confined to the sapwood, so much so that their depth provides an effective indication of the thickness of the sapwood layer along the length of the bow.

The intact terminal is in poor condition but was apparently simply tapered with what appears to be a single rounded nock 6mm wide and 5mm deep occurring on one side 19mm from the end. No nock survives at the incomplete end. It is unlikely that the nock was in the missing 5cm section but it is possible that the bow-stave broke across the nock and that the present end therefore marks the position of a nock; alternatively, there may never have been a nock at this end. Approximately 6cm from the incomplete end a deep crack runs across the full width of the bow, but this appears to be a natural crack rather than a man-made feature. The bow is slightly curved in profile and this curvature, concave at the back and convex at the belly, is the reverse of what would normally

'Archery material' in M.F. Hurley et al. (eds), *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford: excavations, 1986–92* (Waterford, 1997), p. 551. ⁵ J.G.D. Clark, 'Neolithic bows from Somerset, England, and the prehistory of archery in north-western Europe', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 29 (1963), 88–9, fig. 21:5. ⁶ For example, E.G. Heath, *Archery: a military history* (London, 1980), p. 103; G. Rausing, *The bow: some notes on its origin and development* (2nd ed. Manchester, 1967), p. 63 and fig. 24; M. Strickland and R. Hardy, *The great warbow: from Hastings to the Mary Rose* (Stroud, 2005), p. 40; H. Gordon and A. Webb, 'Prehistoric bows of Britain', *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries*, 19 (1976), 10–11; M.J. Leach, 'More about the earlier days of the long-bow', *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries*, 45 (2002), 85–7.

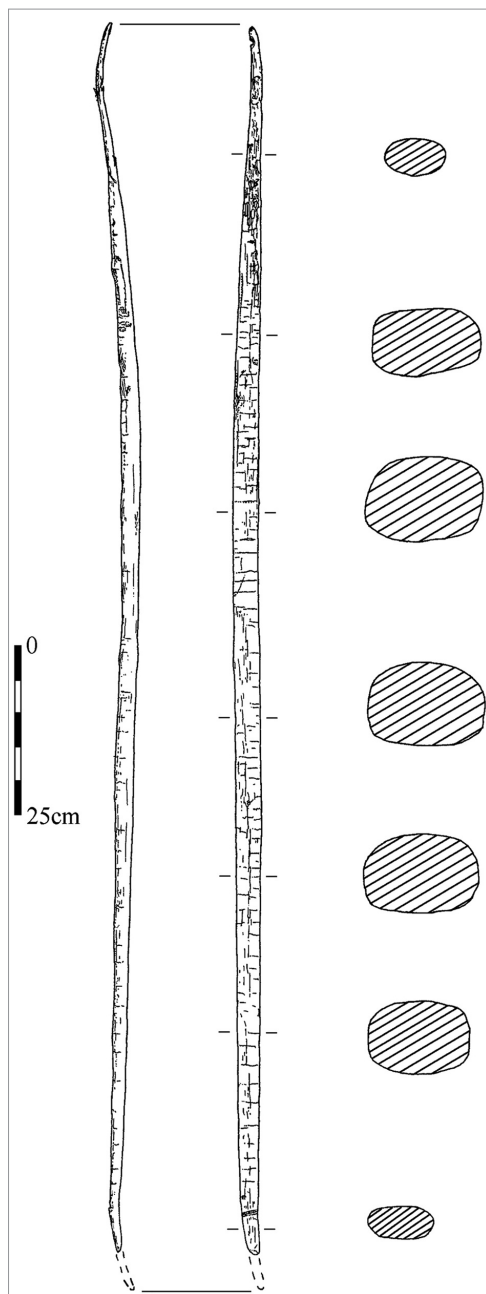


8.2 The Ballinderry bow: detail of the intact end
(© National Museum of Ireland).

8.3 The Ballinderry bow: detail of the incomplete end
(© National Museum of Ireland).



be expected, although the ends are slightly recurved. Several knots have been left standing proud on the back and facets produced by a paring or shaving tool are visible on the belly. Rough cord-like impressions, winding in spiral form around the back, one side and the belly between 89cm and 92cm from the intact end, may represent traces of a handle binding. The circumference of the bow at set distances from the intact terminal is shown in Table 8.1.



8.1 The Ballinderry bow, with cross sections at an enlarged scale (drawn by John Murray; © National Museum of Ireland).

Table 8.1 Circumference dimensions of the Ballinderry bow

At 5cm: 39mm	At 100cm: 111mm
At 10cm: 46mm	At 110cm: 115mm
At 20cm: 55mm	At 120cm: 115mm
At 30cm: 81mm	At 130cm: 106mm
At 40cm: 94mm	At 140cm: 99mm
At 50cm: 106mm	At 150cm: 97mm
At 60cm: 108mm	At 160cm: 88mm
At 70cm: 114mm	At 170cm: 82mm
At 80cm: 110mm	At 180cm: 60mm
At 90cm: 111mm	At 185cm: 46mm

THE BOW AS A WEAPON

The most striking feature of the Ballinderry bow – its length – leads inevitably to it being classified as a longbow (pl. 12). The historiography of medieval archery, particularly in Britain and Ireland, has been dominated by the longbow, reflecting the common perception that it was the classic bow of medieval Britain and was largely responsible for great English victories such as Crécy (1346) and Agincourt (1415). Behind such perceptions, however, lie a host of unanswered questions, notably the fundamental question of whether the longbow can actually be considered a distinct type of bow. This may be an unfounded assumption and, rather than treating longbows and ‘ordinary’ wooden bows as two separate species, it is probably more helpful to see the medieval wooden bow as a single type, within which length (like other characteristics) was a variable factor, depending on circumstances.⁷

The few writers who have attempted to define a longbow tend to emphasize its length – approximately 6 feet (183cm) – and ‘high stacked’ (that is a deep D-shape) cross section.⁸ The wood used was usually – although not exclusively – yew, converted so as to achieve a distinctive arrangement of sapwood and heartwood. Most of the bow was made of the strong and resilient heartwood, which gave the bow its strength but the back of the bow was made of more elastic

⁷ For further discussion on these points, see A. Halpin, *Weapons and warfare in Viking and medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2008), pp 73–4. ⁸ R. Hardy, *Longbow: a social and military history* (2nd ed. Portsmouth, 1986), p. 9; J. Bradbury, *The medieval archer* (Woodbridge, 1985), pp 71–4. Interestingly, Bradbury does not actually mention length at all, while Hardy refers only to a minimum length of 5 feet (152cm) or 5½ feet (168cm), depending on the length of arrow

sapwood, preventing the bow from breaking under the stress of bending.⁹ The purpose of such a conversion is to achieve a natural laminate of woods with different properties in order to cope with the fact that a bow, on bending, is subjected simultaneously to two different and, indeed, opposite forces – compression on the belly and tension on the back. This technique, widely used in making traditional longbows in recent centuries, has been recognized among the bows recovered from the wreck of the *Mary Rose* (an English warship that sank in 1545) and is thought to have been common practice in the great era of late medieval English military archery.¹⁰ A modern technical study has confirmed the suitability of yew owing to its unusually high bending strength and low level of stiffness and has concluded that in terms of material, length and shape the traditional yew longbow ‘represents something close to an optimum of design’.¹¹

This design produced an extremely powerful weapon. Using a combination of theoretical physics and practical experience with the bows recovered from the *Mary Rose*, Hardy and Pratt suggest maximum ranges of up to 350yds (c.320m) for the strongest of the *Mary Rose* bows and up to 250yds (c.230m) for the lightest bows. They also point out that by a regulation of 1542 the minimum target distance to be used in mandatory archery practice in England was 220yds (c.200m).¹² Computer-generated estimates of draw-weights of the *Mary Rose* bows, which came out at between 100lbs and 185lbs (45–84kg), were initially treated with considerable scepticism as being far beyond the ability of most modern archers, but the estimates have apparently been confirmed by measurement of carefully made replica bows.¹³ It has also been suggested that anatomical anomalies noted on human remains from the *Mary Rose* and from a mass grave associated with the Battle of Towton in Yorkshire (1461) may have resulted from the stresses of continual use of such powerful bows.¹⁴

The Ballinderry bow is by any definition a perfectly good longbow in its length, material, timber conversion and cross-section, although the cross-section is not particularly highly stacked and thus the bow was probably somewhat less powerful than the *Mary Rose* ones. Analysis of the conversion pattern (the way in which the original billet of yew was worked to form the bow) was necessarily limited to visual inspection of existing surfaces rather than cutting clean sections,

used. ⁹ S.T. Pope, ‘A study of bows and arrows’, *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnography*, 13 (1923), 354–5; C.A. Bergman et al., ‘Experimental archery: projectile velocities and comparison of bow performances’, *Antiquity*, 62 (1988), 662–4. ¹⁰ Hardy, *Longbow*, pp 55–6. ¹¹ P.H. Blyth, ‘The design and materials of the bow’ in Hardy, *Longbow*, pp 195–8. ¹² P.L. Pratt, ‘The arrow’ in Hardy, *Longbow*, p. 203, fig. 4; P.L. Pratt, ‘Testing the bows’ in Hardy, *Longbow* (3rd ed. Sparkford, 1992), pp 217–18. ¹³ Strickland and Hardy, *Great warbow*, pp 13–15, 17–18. ¹⁴ A.J. Stirland, *Raising the dead: the skeleton crew of King Henry VIII’s great ship, the Mary Rose* (Chichester, 2000), pp 118–34; Hardy, *Longbow* (3rd ed., 1992), pp 200–1; Pratt, ‘Testing the bows’, pp 212–17; C.J. Knüsel, ‘Activity-related skeletal change’ in V. Fiorato et al. (eds), *Blood red roses: the archaeology of a mass grave from the Battle of Towton, AD1461* (Oxford, 2000), esp. pp 108–16.

as was done on some *Mary Rose* bows. Heartwood and sapwood are distinguished in fresh yew wood by pigmentation from chemical extractives in the cell walls; heartwood is amber and sapwood creamy in colour. This distinction is still visible on careful inspection of the surfaces of the Ballinderry bow and it appears that the traditional longbow conversion has been employed. No estimate of the performance of the Ballinderry bow has been possible but replicas of closely comparable Viking-Age bows from Haithabu (Hedeby) were found to have draw weights of 38–46kg (84–101lbs) and with these bows Paulsen achieved distances of up to 195m for light arrows, up to 180m for typical military arrows and up to 160m for heavier hunting arrows.¹⁵ It cannot be assumed, however, that the replicas accurately reflected the capabilities of the original bow, or that Paulsen himself (who admitted to having difficulty in bending the replica bows) matched the abilities of an experienced medieval archer.

There is a functional relationship between the length of a bow and the length of arrows that can be used with it efficiently.¹⁶ The ratio of bow length to draw length (and, by implication, arrow length exclusive of the head) should not be less than 2:1 and is usually somewhat greater, perhaps around 2.4:1. For the Ballinderry bow this would suggest arrows *c.*79cm long (excluding the arrow-head) but Pratt points out that an arrow length of *c.*76cm is about the maximum that can comfortably and safely be drawn by most modern adult males and this can be taken as an indication of the maximum length of the arrows used with the Ballinderry bow.¹⁷ A range of different arrowhead types may have been used.¹⁸

Many ancient bows display a degree of curvature in profile, usually towards the belly (that is in the direction in which the bow would have curved when braced). In archers' terminology, these bows are said to have 'followed the string', taking on permanently some of the curvature caused by the bowstring on a braced bow. The Ballinderry bow, however, curves away from the belly, although the ends are slightly recurved. Hardy notes that this feature is also found on most of the *Mary Rose* bows and feels that it cannot be explained convincingly either by usage of the bows or by post-depositional processes. He concludes that it reflects a deliberate choice of yew, displaying a natural reflexed curvature in order to achieve optimum straightness in the bow after extensive use – a straightness that meant a longer and faster return of the limbs from full draw to the braced position when shooting; the faster that return, the greater the cast of the bow.¹⁹ The presence of this feature further underlines the similarity of the Ballinderry bow to late medieval longbows.

¹⁵ H. Paulsen, 'Pfeil und bogen in Haithabu' in A. Geibig and H. Paulsen, *Das archäologische Fundmaterial VI* (Neumünster, 1999), pp 125, 133–5. See also J. Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts: a select catalogue* (London, 1980), p. 74, no. 266. Besides the complete bow referred to here, fragments of six other bows were also found at Haithabu (Hedeby). ¹⁶ Rausing, *The bow*, p. 163; Pope, 'Study of bows and arrows', 360. ¹⁷ Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, p. 70; Pratt, 'The arrow', p. 199. ¹⁸ Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 80–127. ¹⁹ Hardy, *Longbow* (3rd ed., 1992), pp 202–3.

THE BOW AS A VIKING ARTEFACT

The bow was no isolated find, for Ballinderry produced a full assemblage of weaponry, including a sword, an axehead, two spearheads and what is either a socketed knife or a single-edged spearhead.²⁰ These tend to be considered as Viking weapons but most of them – even the famous sword – could have been used either by Irish or by Viking warriors. Unlike the other weapons, however, the bow can arguably be considered a definitively Viking artefact. An assessment of this must begin with the archaeological and historical evidence for the use of archery in early medieval Ireland, which need only be summarized here.²¹ At the dawn of the Viking Age, archery had been effectively unknown in Ireland for some two millennia and the Vikings can be credited with its reintroduction. There is abundant archaeological and historical evidence, from the mid-ninth century onwards, for the use of the bow in warfare by the Vikings and their Hiberno-Norse descendants. By contrast, there is no compelling evidence for the military use of archery by the Gaelic Irish before the thirteenth century. A handful of arrowheads are known from Irish sites of this period, including Lagore crannog and Knowth, Co. Meath, the Dunbell raths in Co. Kilkenny and Cahercommaun, Co. Clare.²² All are arrowheads of definitive Scandinavian type dating from between the ninth and the twelfth century and their presence at these sites can as plausibly be attributed to the activities of Viking or Hiberno-Norse archers as to Irish ones.²³ Taking all this into account, a probable arrowhead from the stone fort of Carraig Aille II, Co. Limerick, dated between the eighth and the eleventh century may represent the only – and apparently exceptional – evidence for use of the bow on an Irish site of this period.²⁴

Arrowheads by their nature are highly mobile and, as noted above, can be intrusive on sites, reflecting the activities of external attackers rather than occupants of the site. The same cannot be said of bows, however, and the presence of one of Europe's finest early medieval bows at Ballinderry is clearly crucial to the question of Irish use of archery in the Hiberno-Norse period. Hencken was quite definite in considering Ballinderry as an Irish, rather than a Viking settlement and this interpretation has not, as yet, been convincingly

²⁰ Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1', 127, 138–9, 143, 156; figs 5A, C, D, 25A.

²¹ Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 35–8. ²² For the Lagore arrowhead (an old find), see H. O'Neill Hencken, 'Lagore crannog: an Irish royal residence of the seventh to tenth century AD', *PRIA*, 53C (1950–1), 5, 7. For Knowth, see A. Halpin, 'Medieval weaponry' in G. Eogan et al., *Excavations at Knowth, 5: The archaeology of Knowth in the first and second millennia AD* (Dublin, 2012), pp 663–7. For Cahercommaun, see H. O'Neill Hencken, *Cahercommaun: a stone fort in County Clare* (Dublin, 1938), pp 2–3, 53; fig. 32:728. The arrowheads from Dunbell raths (NMI, reg. nos R5AI 152.56–57) are unpublished but are illustrated in Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pl. II. ²³ For the arrowhead types, see Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 75–96, 100–3. ²⁴ S.P. Ó Riordáin, 'Lough Gur excavations: Carraig Aille and the "Spectacles"', *PRIA*, 52C (1948–50), 78, 108, 110; fig. 10:421. This object is not currently locatable in the NMI and thus has not been examined by the writer.

challenged.²⁵ Nevertheless, while the evidence from Ballinderry and Carraig Aille suggests that it might be unwise entirely to rule out some Gaelic Irish use of the bow in the Hiberno-Norse period, the overall thrust of the historical and archaeological evidence, by its very absence, indicates that any such use was so insignificant in military terms as to be negligible. It is thus safest to consider the Ballinderry material as a graphic example of the extent to which Viking weaponry could on occasion be adopted by the Irish. Whatever the background to the gathering of the weapons at Ballinderry, there can be little doubt that the bow is ultimately of Viking background and might even be of Scandinavian origin.

The Ballinderry bow fits very comfortably into the known pattern of Viking-Age archery, not just as a bow but more specifically as a longbow. The Iron Age (second to fifth centuries AD) bows from Nydam, Vimose and Kragehul in Denmark are generally considered to be true longbows.²⁶ The bows from the Alemannic cemetery of Lupfen/Oberflacht in southern Germany, probably of seventh-century date and c.170–90cm in original length, are taken by Hardy as evidence of the survival of the longbow tradition in the Germanic world through the early medieval period.²⁷ A particularly important parallel is the complete yew bow from Viking-Age Haithabu, which is of comparable date (ninth to eleventh centuries) and very similar dimensions to the Ballinderry bow (191cm in length, 40mm in maximum width and 33mm in maximum depth).²⁸ Further evidence for the existence of longbows in Viking-Age Scandinavia comes from a unique collection of arrow shafts preserved in ice in the mountains of Oppdal in central Norway.²⁹ Here, arrows up to 70cm long suggest the use of bows c.170cm in length in the period 600–1000.³⁰ The Oppdal material is derived from hunting activity rather than warfare and it is likely that a preference for longer bows was even more pronounced in the military arena. Finally, evidence from Hiberno-Norse Dublin and Waterford confirms the widespread use of archery, predominantly for military purposes and suggests that while most bows were relatively short, probably c.120–50cm, they were in all other respects similar to the Ballinderry bow.³¹

25 Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1', 226. Johnson, 'Ballinderry crannog', 65, 69 refers to a 'remote possibility' that the site's occupants were of Scandinavian origin. 26 Rausing, *The bow*, pp 57–8; Hardy, *Longbow*, pp 21–2; Bradbury, *Medieval archer*, pp 14–15. 27 Hardy, *Longbow*, pp 21–2, 30. Riesch has argued that the Oberflacht bows 'are of a unique design which is different from all other Iron Age bows found in Germany or northern Europe', but while they are distinctive in their cross-section and reinforced handles, it could be argued that the general similarities with the Danish bows are at least as significant as the differences (H. Riesch, 'Alemannic bows: early medieval bows and arrows found at the Alemannic burial ground of Oberflacht (southern Germany)', *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries*, 37 (1994), 12–18). See also Rausing, *The bow*, pp 57–8; Heath, *Archery*, p. 102; Bradbury, *Medieval archer*, pp 14–15, 75. 28 Paulsen, 'Pfiel und bogen in Haithabu', pp 95–9. 29 O. Farbrege, *Pilefunn fra Oppdalsfjella* (Trondheim, 1972). 30 Ibid., pp 105–9. 31 Halpin, 'Archery material', pp 546–52; Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 50–74.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOW

The Ballinderry bow is important from a cultural viewpoint as a definitively Viking artefact, although its somewhat anomalous occurrence on a 'classic' Irish site poses some unanswered questions. Was it being used at Ballinderry by an Irish archer or by a Viking? Was it actually being used at all (as a bow) at Ballinderry, or simply being reused as building material? The resolution of these and other questions may have to wait until more is known about the complex patterns of cultural interaction in Viking-Age Ireland. Whatever the immediate background, however, there can be little doubt that the Ballinderry bow is ultimately of Viking background and, indeed, may well have been made in Scandinavia.

The importance of the bow for military archaeology and history both within Ireland and beyond, however, is more easily quantified. The study of the late medieval English longbow has been bedevilled by a long-standing popular view that the 'longbow' first developed in Wales, where it was discovered in the 1270s and 1280s by Edward I of England and introduced by him into English warfare.³² Prior to this (according to the theory), another type of bow, the 'shortbow' was used in English warfare including, for instance, at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. This view – apparently first formulated by Oman and subsequently developed in more detail by Morris – seems to be based on a misinterpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry and of Giraldus Cambrensis' comments on Welsh archers in his *Iter Cambriae* and *Descriptio Cambriae*.³³ It is also significant for the military history of Ireland because Giraldus records the presence of Welsh archers in the earliest Anglo-Norman forces operating in Ireland and, indeed, some historians have assumed that these late twelfth-century archers introduced the longbow to Ireland.³⁴ In fact, Giraldus never refers to longbows being used by the Welsh – indeed, the term 'longbow' (or 'long bowe') is not recorded in English until the middle of the fifteenth century and there is no term in Giraldus' Latin that can be translated as 'longbow' or even 'long bow'.³⁵ The term he uses, *arcus*, means simply 'bow'. Moreover, he never makes any reference whatsoever to the length of the bows used by these Welsh archers.

The serious shortcomings of the 'Welsh longbow' theory have been discussed in detail by the writer elsewhere and more recently by Strickland, who has also comprehensively refuted the 'myth of the shortbow'.³⁶ The Irish archery

32 See, for example, R.E. Oakeshott, *The archaeology of weapons* (London, 1960), pp 293–4; H.L. Blackmore, *Hunting weapons* (London, 1971), pp 143–4; Hardy, *Longbow*, pp 36–8.

33 C. Oman, *The art of war in the Middle Ages, AD378–1515* (Oxford and London, 1885), pp 96–7, 100; J.E. Morris, *The Welsh wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), pp 26, 34, 100–1. 34 For example, F.X. Martin, 'The Normans: arrival and settlement (1169–c.1300)' in T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin (eds), *The course of Irish history* (2nd ed. Cork, 1984), p. 137. 35 Bradbury, *Medieval archer*, pp 71, n. 1; 152, n. 22. 36 A. Halpin, 'Archery and warfare in medieval Ireland: a historical and archaeological study', 2 vols (PhD, UCD, 1999), i, pp 101–4, 181–4;

assemblage provides a rare opportunity to look in detail at actual medieval archery equipment and it clearly disproves the Welsh longbow theory. Not only is the Ballinderry bow an example of a perfectly fine longbow in tenth-century Ireland but the evidence from Dublin and especially from Waterford indicates that the bows used by Giraldus Cambrensis' Welsh archers in late twelfth-century Ireland would probably not be considered as longbows.³⁷ The Irish material, including the Ballinderry bow, provides the basis for a more nuanced and accurate model of developments in medieval archery technology. It seems clear, first, that there is no fundamental difference between the 'longbow' and shorter wooden bows and that length was merely one variable factor in the range of attributes that made up the bow-making tradition of Viking, Hiberno-Norse and Anglo-Norman cultures. The Irish evidence suggests two possible scenarios: the first is that the Hiberno-Norse bow-making tradition continued relatively unchanged into the Anglo-Norman period; the alternative possibility is that the Anglo-Normans brought their own bow-making tradition, which resembled the Hiberno-Norse one because of a common north European (perhaps specifically Scandinavian) background. In either case these earlier traditions already displayed all the main features of the late medieval English longbow tradition.³⁸

Despite the evidence for continuity between the Hiberno-Norse and Anglo-Norman bow-making traditions, there are indications that the occurrence of what can be considered a longbow in a tenth-century context at Ballinderry may not be entirely anomalous. Attempts to infer bow lengths from the socket diameters of surviving arrowheads leads to the surprising conclusion that there is more evidence for the use of relatively long bows in Ireland during the tenth and early eleventh centuries than in the late eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁹ Such a conclusion flies in the face of conventional military history, but although derived purely from the indirect evidence of arrowheads and arrow shafts, it finds direct physical support in the Ballinderry bow (and, quite possibly, the Haithabu bow) in the tenth century. How this is to be explained, particularly in military terms, is another matter. It has to be admitted that there are no obvious trends or factors in the military history of the period – as we currently understand it – that would help to explain why relatively longer and more powerful bows should be more popular in the tenth century than in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. This must, therefore, be regarded as a tentative and even speculative suggestion but one that is worth recording until future research either proves or disproves it. If nothing else, it highlights the significance of the Ballinderry bow and the potential implications of the occurrence of this formidable weapon in tenth-century Ireland.

Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 42–4; Strickland and Hardy, *Great warbow*, pp 34–48.

³⁷ Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 53, 69–74; Halpin, 'Archery material', pp 548–50.

³⁸ Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 69–74. ³⁹ Halpin, 'Archery and warfare in medieval Ireland', i, pp 223–7; Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 170–3.

Fighting with silver: the Woodstown assemblage

JOHN SHEEHAN

It is almost twenty-five years since Ross Samson published an important paper entitled 'Fighting with silver: rethinking trading, raiding and hoarding'.¹ In many ways the study of silver has progressed in the meantime, not least because of the discovery and recognition of 'assemblages' and how they allow the development of new perspectives on the use of silver in the Viking Age. This essay will address issues that arise from the discovery of the first recorded Viking-Age silver assemblage from a Scandinavian context in Ireland, from the *longphort* at Woodstown, Co. Waterford.

Silver was a principal economic exchange medium throughout the Viking world, though it has recently been postulated that various forms of commodity monies were also of significance as means of exchange.² In Viking-Age Ireland silver was generally used in non-numismatic form, in a bullion or metal-weight economy, though coin usage did progress and culminate in minting in Dublin at the end of the tenth century. Ingots and ornaments of various types, predominantly arm-rings, both types occasionally reduced to hacksilver – pieces of silver that are deliberately cut and broken to be used as a means of payment in a weight-based economic system – served as a form of bullion currency within which imported coins were generally valued by weight. The ornaments served a dual purpose, since they could also be used as display and status items in the 'social economy'. It is no surprise, given the nature and duration of Scandinavian settlement and activity in Ireland, that a large amount of Viking-Age silver has been found here. In fact, more than 125 silver hoards of ninth- and tenth-century date are now on record, representing a concentration of finds that, in numerical terms, is not equalled outside Scandinavia during this period.³ Just over half of these are 'coinless' hoards – finds composed exclusively of non-numismatic silver – while the remainder comprise either 'mixed' hoards – finds in which coins occur alongside non-numismatic material – or coin hoards.

1 R. Samson, 'Fighting with silver: rethinking trading, raiding and hoarding' in R. Samson (ed.), *Social approaches to Viking studies* (Glasgow, 1991), pp 123–33. 2 D. Skre, 'Commodity money, silver and coinage in Viking-Age Scandinavia' in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Silver economies, monetisation and society in Scandinavia, AD800–1100* (Aarhus, 2011), pp 63–88. 3 For published references to the coin and mixed hoards, see M. Blackburn and H. Pagan, 'Checklist of coin hoards from the British Isles, c.450–1180' at www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/coins/hoards/. For the mixed and coinless finds, see J. Sheehan, 'Early Viking-Age silver hoards from Ireland and their Scandinavian elements' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and*

Almost half of Ireland's hoards contain coins and, consequently, it may seem that there are good prospects for dating hoards and the various types of non-numismatic material that occur in them. Unfortunately, however, the matter is not so straightforward, being complicated, for instance, by the fact that all of the mixed hoards were deposited during the tenth century, while the coinless hoards have a wider date range, from the second half of the ninth century onwards. Only four of the coin hoards date from the ninth century, while for the most part they belong to the period from 940 onwards. In addition, the bullion values of the hoards, which vary significantly, contribute towards the complexity of the issue, with many of the coin hoards appearing to be rather small finds and with the coinless examples tending to be significantly heavier. Consequently, it is the latter types of hoard that account for the great bulk of the considerable amount of silver wealth that was present in Ireland during the ninth and tenth centuries, and many of these cannot be closely dated. As a result of these and other issues, it is difficult to relate the hoards to historically attested events, though this is always a problematic exercise.

Most of Ireland's Viking-Age silver hoards are to be found in the kingdoms of Mumu (Munster), the Southern Uí Néill and the Northern Uí Néill. While it is not always possible to identify a context for these finds, it is nonetheless evident that there are occasional correlations between groupings of particular types of hoard and certain locations that are associated with the dominant dynasties of these kingdoms. It is clear, from both general distributional considerations and from the tendency for many of the silver hoards to derive from Irish sites – such as royal centres, ecclesiastical foundations, ringforts and crannogs – that a great many of the Viking-Age hoards from Ireland represent Irish rather than Scandinavian wealth. Reflection on how this silver wealth was acquired usually focuses on the economic relationships that must have existed between the Irish and the Scandinavians. It has been suggested, for instance, that Viking-Age Dublin exchanged silver 'not only for the commodities required to sustain daily life – to build houses and boats, to eat, drink and dress – but also for trade goods, including slaves'.⁴ While this view is undoubtedly correct to a degree, it does not take account of the importance of other potential mechanisms for silver exchange, such as the formation of political alliances, the practice of gift exchange, the conventions of ransoming and, perhaps most importantly, the exercise of tribute. Some of the finds, such as ornament hoards, appear to be socially motivated; others may have been more economically inspired, such as hacksilver hoards representing the use of silver as currency, while other finds appear more likely to signify tribute, such as large bullion hoards.⁵

Scandinavia in the early Viking Age (Dublin, 1998), appendix at pp 198–202. 4 J. Graham-Campbell, 'The early Viking Age in the Irish Sea area' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, p. 106. 5 J. Sheehan, 'Social and economic integration in Viking-Age Ireland: the evidence of the hoards' in J. Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home* (Leeds, 2004), pp 177–88.

THE WOODSTOWN ASSEMBLAGE

Just over forty items of Viking-Age silver, predominantly in hacksilver form, were recovered during the recent archaeological investigations of the Scandinavian settlement at Woodstown, Co. Waterford, comprising an impressive numerical quantity within the context of Viking-Age Ireland (pl. 13). The great majority of these pieces were recovered, either through metal detecting or dry sieving, from the site's topsoil mantle, and were therefore out of their primary archaeological contexts. There is little evidence that relates them either to one another or to underlying archaeological features, and there is nothing to indicate that the silver derived from a hoard or hoards. Rather, the scattered nature of its distribution across the site appears to indicate that it had been randomly lost, piece by piece. The Woodstown collection, therefore, should be deemed an 'assemblage' of silver that circulated as currency on the site, rather than as a hoard, and as such it represents the first recorded find of this nature from a Scandinavian settlement in Ireland. Given that only a small area of the site was archaeologically investigated, it seems probable that these finds represent only a modest proportion of the losses from the pool of silver that circulated there during the Viking Age.

The Woodstown assemblage comprises two complete ingots, twenty-four hacksilver ingot fragments, six hacksilver fragments of arm-rings, six pieces of casting waste, single hacksilver fragments of a sheet and a rod, a brooch fragment (possibly hacksilver) and a weight.⁶ The collection is characterized by the predominance of ingots and ingot-derived hacksilver. Only two of the finds were recovered from stratified deposits: the first, an ingot fragment, derived from a post-medieval field bank, clearly not its original context, while the second, a small ingot, was recovered from the fill of a metalworking furnace.

The latter ingot is of special significance because of its association with the furnace. This was principally used for iron production, but also produced evidence of non-ferrous metalworking, including both copper alloy and silver.⁷ The finds from the furnace, as well as the ingot, included a balance-scale weight and sherds of cupels, an association that would not be unexpected in a silver production context. It has been established that cupels, also known as heating trays, were used in the assaying and refining of silver in several important settlements in Viking-Age Scandinavia, such as Birka and Sigtuna, as well as in Dublin and York. Analyses have demonstrated that several of the Woodstown examples were also used in silver assaying and, indeed, that some crucibles from the site were used for melting silver.⁸ Söderberg has suggested that cupels

6 Descriptive entries for the individual items from Woodstown are included in J. Sheehan, 'Silver' in I. Russell and M.F. Hurley (eds), *Woodstown: a Viking-Age settlement in Co. Waterford* (Dublin, 2014), pp 198–200, 203–7. 7 T. Young, 'Discussion of the metalworking evidence' in Russell and Hurley (eds), *Woodstown*, pp 103–13. 8 Young, 'Discussion of the

functioned as control elements in the production and use of Viking-Age silver as a means of payment, in the same way as balance-scales and weights did, and that the workshops in which they are found may have been associated with the maintenance and control of economic power.⁹ In this context it should be noted that Woodstown has also produced a very large number of balance-scale weights.¹⁰

The furnace and its associated material indicate the strong possibility of the practice of silver smelting, perhaps focused on ingot production, at Woodstown. While the finds from elsewhere on the site include examples of silver casting waste, this in itself does not necessarily provide further evidence for onsite silver working. It is all derived from unstratified contexts, unfortunately, and furthermore material of this type is on record from a small number of hoards from Britain and Ireland, indicating that it occasionally formed part of the broad pool of silver that circulated in the Irish Sea area during the Viking Age. Nevertheless, despite this reservation, silver smithing and artefact production seem more than just a plausible possibility at Woodstown and as such this settlement represents the first archaeologically attested verification for Scandinavian silver working in Ireland, even though other evidence indicates that Viking-Age Dublin was a more important silver-working centre.

Comparanda for the individual types of item that make up the Woodstown assemblage, which are principally ingots and hacksilver, obviously lie in the many coinless and mixed hoards from Ireland and the Irish Sea area. It is debatable, however, whether there is actually a meaningful equivalence between the overall phenomena represented by assemblages and hoards and, consequently, comparison between them is problematic and should be approached with caution. This is essentially because of the differing nature of the two bodies of evidence. Many of the hoards from Ireland represent the storage of wealth, often in the form of complete ornaments, and appear to relate to the social economy.¹¹ On the other hand, the hacksilver predominance of the Woodstown assemblage, in the form of various lost and mislaid items that were in active circulation – possibly in small transactions of quotidian character over the period of use of the settlement – appears to represent the use of wealth as currency. The hoards also differ from the assemblage in that the former are sealed collections, being deposited at particular points in time, even if some may have served as accumulated stores to which the owner, over a period of time, may have added to and/or withdrawn from. In some instances they may have been deposited for the long term, while in others they may have served as shorter-term caches. In

metalworking evidence', pp 111–12. 9 A. Söderberg, 'Metallurgic ceramics as a key to Viking-Age workshop organisation', *Journal of Nordic Archaeological Science*, 14 (2004), 120–3. 10 P.F. Wallace, 'Weights and weight systems in Viking-Age Ireland' in A. Reynolds and L. Webster (eds), *Early medieval art and archaeology in the northern world: studies in honour of James Graham-Campbell* (Leiden, 2013), pp 308–9. 11 Sheehan, 'Social and economic

addition, the components of hoards were not necessarily solely drawn from the same pool of silver that circulated for economic purposes.¹² Some hoards may even have been deposited for non-economic reasons, without the intention of recovery.¹³

Despite the reservations that arise from the potentially distinct character of these two bodies of evidence, it appears reasonable to explore the question of whether there is any evident degree of correlation, and potential connection or distinction, between the Woodstown silver and the hoard evidence that is on record from its broad geographical and political hinterlands. For this reason the hoard evidence from the kingdom of Mumu (essentially early medieval Munster),¹⁴ the region within which Woodstown is located, is reflected on within the context of the assemblage below.¹⁵

It is noteworthy that discoveries made over the past two decades in the main silver-using regions of the Viking world demonstrate that, excepting single finds, there are now two distinct types of context for the occurrence of Viking-Age silver – hoards and assemblages from settlement finds. There is as yet no equivalent for the Woodstown silver assemblage from Viking-Age Dublin or indeed from anywhere else in Ireland.¹⁶ There are comparable assemblages from elsewhere, however, most notably from the central places at Kaupang in Norway and Uppåkra in Sweden, as well as from the Torksey winter camp in Lincolnshire and the Yorkshire site currently referred to as ARSNY.¹⁷ As was the case at Woodstown, most of the silver at these sites occurs in the form of hacksilver and is often highly fragmented and, significantly, each of the sites has also produced impressive quantities of balance-scale weights. The significance and broad implications of the correspondence between the Woodstown silver and the assemblages from these sites are considered below.

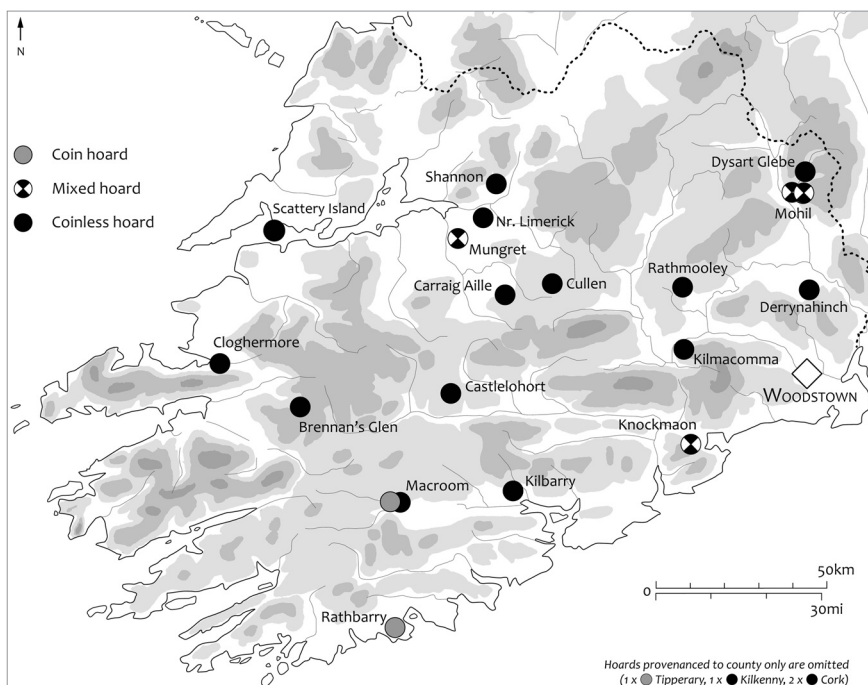
integration in Viking-Age Ireland', pp 181–4. ¹² It should be noted, however, that hoards of hacksilver could be viewed in this manner, since the silver in them was so rendered for commercial purposes (J. Graham-Campbell, 'The coinless hoard' in H. Clarke and E. Schia (eds), *Coins and archaeology: Medieval Archaeology Research Group, proceedings of the first meeting at Isegran, Norway, 1988* (Oxford, 1989), p. 55). ¹³ For a recent discussion of ritual hoarding in the context of Viking-Age Ireland, see J. Graham-Campbell and J. Sheehan, 'Viking-Age gold and silver from Irish crannogs and other watery places', *JIA*, 18 (2009), 77–93. ¹⁴ Mumu was a region of shifting boundaries. For the purposes of this essay, however, it is accepted that the broad extent of the kingdom around 900 included Osraige, Loígis and Uí Failge, now in the modern province of Leinster, in addition to the area covered by the modern province of Munster. ¹⁵ There is a paucity of silver hoards from the southern part of Mumu's neighbouring kingdom to the east of Woodstown, Laigin, and consequently it is excluded from this discussion. On the basis of the hoard evidence, Laigin does not seem to have formed part of the Viking-Age economic hinterland of Waterford harbour and it may have been consciously excluded for political reasons. ¹⁶ The results from the recent commencement of work on the Linn Duachaill *longphort*, Co. Louth, however, seem promising in this regard. ¹⁷ ARSNY is the acronym of 'A riverine site near York', the precise location of which has not been revealed in order to protect the site. It is a Viking 'camp' of later ninth-century date, broadly comparable with a *longphort* in the Irish context. The author

Silver and hacksilver from Woodstown and Mumu

Woodstown is positioned on the River Suir, on the border between Déisi Muman and Osraige and on the eastern periphery of the kingdom of Mumu. This location is in keeping with the apparent tendency for *longphuirt* to be positioned on political boundaries, suggesting that the Scandinavian strategy was to exploit economic opportunity alongside political rivalry.¹⁸ There are twenty-four Viking-Age silver hoards of ninth- or tenth-century date on record from Mumu, representing 20 per cent of the total number from Ireland (fig. 9.1). The significance of this impressive quantity pales to some extent when it is compared to the number of hoards from the territory of the Southern Uí Néill,¹⁹ but nonetheless it remains quite considerable when contrasted with the appreciably lesser amounts known from several of Ireland's other early medieval kingdoms. Most of the Mumu finds are coinless hoards, comprising seventeen examples; four are 'mixed', in which coins occur together with non-numismatic silver, and three are coin hoards. All of the mixed and coin hoards were deposited during the tenth century, from c.930 onwards, and most contained only small numbers of coins, mainly Anglo-Saxon issues. In purely bullion terms, however, it is the non-numismatic material – ornaments, ingots and hacksilver – that accounts for the great bulk of the silver wealth represented in the hoards from Mumu during the ninth and tenth centuries.

The Mumu hoards do not form a consistent grouping, varying in size, composition, date and the presence or absence of coins and hacksilver, as well as in the degree of fragmentation when hacksilver is present. Some of them appear to be socially motivated, some may signify tribute, while others are clearly economically inspired and represent the use of silver as currency. With a few exceptions, however, it is difficult to associate these hoards with the *longphort* at Woodstown and it should be borne in mind that many of them relate to other temporal, social and economic contexts in the region, perhaps mainly associated with the tenth-century Hiberno-Scandinavian towns in the province and their hinterlands, as well as with Mumu's Irish centres of power. Despite these provisos, it is a worthwhile exercise to examine the twenty-one hoards that contain non-numismatic silver and to reflect on the extent to which they share the general trends and features apparent in the Woodstown silver assemblage. When this is done, it emerges that the assemblage is quite distinct in a number of respects from the majority of the hoards. For instance, the latter tend to

is grateful to the late Richard Hall for drawing his attention to this site and for pointing out its parallels with Woodstown. ¹⁸ E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois' in P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), p. 140; J. Sheehan, 'The *longphort* in Viking-Age Ireland', *Acta Archaeologica*, 79 (2008), 286. ¹⁹ The number of hoards on record from Southern Uí Néill is just over twice that of Mumu and is much greater in bullion weight terms (E. Purcell and J. Sheehan, 'Viking Dublin: enmities, alliances and the cold gleam of silver' in D.M. Hadley and L.T. Harkel (eds), *Everyday life in Viking 'towns': social approaches to Viking-Age towns in Ireland and England, c.850–1100* (Oxford, 2013), pp 37–9).



9.1 Ninth- or tenth-century silver hoards of Scandinavian character in Mumu.

contain complete ornaments or ornament-derived hacksilver, which occur in all but two of the finds and represent almost 80 per cent of the individual components of the Mumu hoards. On the other hand, there are no complete ornaments from Woodstown, where ornament-derived hacksilver accounts for less than 20 per cent of the material. Ingots or ingot-derived hacksilver amount to just over 20 per cent of the components of the hoards. In contrast, ingot material dominates the Woodstown material, accounting for some 65 per cent of it. When all non-numismatic items from the hoards and assemblage are compared, it emerges that a much larger proportion of the Woodstown material is 10g or less, with a significant proportion of it being under 5g, indicating that the assemblage features a greater degree of fragmentation than the hoard material. Nicking – a characteristic Scandinavian method of assessing silver quality as well as testing for plated forgeries during circulation in commercial transactions – occurs on over 50 per cent of the components in the hoards, while it is present on 33 per cent of the Woodstown items, and in both instances it is predominantly found on ingots or ingot-derived hacksilver. Finally, casting waste, whether it be regarded as evidence for onsite silver working or as a form of bullion, accounts for 15 per cent of the Woodstown silver, while it occurs only once and in only one example of the hoards.

Clearly there are important distinctions between the Woodstown assemblage and the overall trends evident in the Mumu hoards, with many of these differences relating to the nature of the hacksilver element at Woodstown. Hacksilver hoards are of rare occurrence in Ireland where, of the eighty-two recorded finds that contain non-numismatic silver, only a dozen consist exclusively of hacksilver. Most of these contain ingot-derived material, occasionally in association with ornament-derived hacksilver, and half of them also feature coins in their composition; all of the latter hoards were deposited during the tenth century. Nevertheless, not all of the hoards from Ireland that contain hacksilver may be categorized as 'true' hacksilver hoards in the sense in which this phenomenon is now customarily understood in Scandinavia. Birgitta Hårdh has defined the latter as hoards 'where half or more of the objects are fragments, and where most of the objects weigh less than five grams',²⁰ a phenomenon that she considers 'is best explained as a collection of currency'.²¹ Under these terms, many of the finds with hacksilver from Ireland fall outside the characterization of true hacksilver hoards, largely owing to the constraint imposed by the weight stipulation.

On the basis of the coin-dated hoard evidence from Ireland and the Irish Sea region, true hacksilver hoards appear to be a tenth-century phenomenon. It seems probable, however, on the basis of the evidence of three important hoards containing large amounts of this material that hacksilver was circulating during the later ninth century. Each of these finds – from Dysart Island (no. 4), Co. Westmeath,²² Cuerdale, Lancashire,²³ and Silverdale, also in Lancashire²⁴ – was deposited during the first decade of the tenth century, but it is reasonable to suggest that their contents reflect the types of silver item that were in circulation during the closing decades of the preceding century. Indeed, it is of interest to note, in passing, that the high degree of hacksilver fragmentation in the Woodstown assemblage is most closely matched in the Dysart hoard.

The apparent absence from Ireland of ninth-century hacksilver hoards may simply reflect the fact that it has no recorded ninth-century mixed hoards. This latter absence is perhaps not surprising when it is considered that Ireland has only four ninth-century coin hoards, while there are over fifty tenth-century examples on record, and it appears that the evidentiary aphorism that 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence' may well be applicable to the case of

²⁰ B. Hårdh, *Silver in the Viking Age: a regional-economic study* (Stockholm, 1996), p. 33.

²¹ B. Hårdh, 'Hacksilver and ingots' in D. Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange: dealing with silver in the Viking Age* (Aarhus, 2008), p. 99. ²² M. Ryan et al., 'Six silver finds of the Viking period from the vicinity of Lough Ennell, Co. Westmeath', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 339–56 and pls 6–12. ²³ J. Graham-Campbell, *The Cuerdale hoard and related Viking-Age silver and gold, from Britain and Ireland, in the British Museum* (London, 2011). ²⁴ This recent find contains a very similar mixture of material to that represented in the Cuerdale hoard, although on a smaller scale, and includes several fragments of hacksilver below 5g. The hoard was deposited in the first decade of the tenth century. The author is grateful to Gareth Williams, British

hacksilver in ninth-century Ireland. The conclusion is that the likely date of the first appearance of hacksilver in Ireland could now be extended backwards and, consequently, that some of Ireland's coinless hacksilver hoards, which on the basis of the parallel coin-dated hoard evidence alone might appear likely to be of tenth-century date, could well have been deposited during the second half of the ninth century (see Gareth Williams, this volume, for an argument that places it in the third quarter of the ninth century). Even though the silver from Woodstown cannot be specifically dated to this period, having a collective potential date range from the ninth to the mid-eleventh century,²⁵ it seems more probable that it dates to the earlier part of this timespan.²⁶

There are only three hoards from Mumu that meet Hårdh's stipulations for true hacksilver finds and, interestingly, each is from the eastern side of the kingdom, where Woodstown is also located. They derive from Osraige and Déisi Muman, in the river valleys of the Suir, Nore and Barrow – the 'three sisters' that flow into the *longphort's* geographical setting of Waterford harbour. These are the hoards from Mohil (no. 1) and Dysart Glebe, both in Co. Kilkenny, and Kilmacomma, Co. Waterford.²⁷ This group may form a distinct hoarding horizon since its components have several consistent patterns that they share with the Woodstown assemblage. The Kilmacomma hoard was found in a ringfort that overlooks the Suir some 30km upriver from Woodstown, directly across the river from the early ecclesiastical site of Inishlounaght from where a hacksilver piece is also on record.²⁸ The hoard comprises twelve items, all in hacksilver form, with the majority derived from ingots. Eight pieces weigh less than 5g, with most of these weighing less than 1g, and three of them feature nicks.

In every significant respect, this hoard is very closely paralleled in the Woodstown assemblage, from where it may ultimately have derived in its entirety. The find belongs to a very small group of hacksilver hoards from Ireland in which the components came from both ingots and ornaments, another example of which is the small hoard from Dysart Glebe, an early ecclesiastical site on the banks of the Nore. This comprises only two hacksilver items, derived from an ingot and a broad-band arm-ring of the type also represented at Kilmacomma and Woodstown; both weigh less than 5g and each is nicked. The Mohil find, from nearby Dysart Glebe, was discovered during the geological excavation of the floor levels of Dunmore Cave. It is a mixed hoard, of which the

Museum, for discussing this find with him. 25 Sheehan, 'Longphort in Viking-Age Ireland', 291.

26 It should be noted that, on the basis of the entirety of the archaeological evidence, it seems to be the case that most of the occupation and related activities at Woodstown took place during the ninth century. The author is grateful to Stephen Harrison for discussion on this issue. 27 D.P. Drew and D. Huddart, 'Dunmore Cave, County Kilkenny: a reassessment', *PRIA*, 80B (1980), 1–23; M.E. Hall, 'A hacksilver find from Dysart, Thomastown', *Old Kilkenny Review*, 4:5 (1993), 1164–5; J. Sheehan, 'The Viking-Age silver hoard from Kilmacomma, Co. Waterford: a Woodstown connection?', *Peritia*, 20 (2008), 232–50. 28 J. Sheehan, 'The Rathmooley hoard and other finds of Viking-Age silver from Co. Tipperary',

non-numismatic element consists solely of one piece of ingot-derived hacksilver that is nicked and less than 5g. This was accompanied by a small number of coins and coin fragments, including Anglo-Saxon and Kufic issues, as well as coins of the Vikings of East Anglia and Northumbria. On the basis of this, a deposition date of *c.*930 has been proposed for the hoard.²⁹

The find is of special interest in the Woodstown context given its Kufic element, making these two locations the only recorded occurrences of Arabic coins in Mumu. It is worth noting that one of the Mohil coins – an Abbāsid dirham of Kaliph Al-Mu'tamid of the Arminīyah mint in Armenia – was in circulation for at least forty years before it was finally deposited in Co. Kilkenny and it is tempting to hypothesize that both it and the hacksilver piece derived from the same pool of silver, perhaps of Woodstown origin, before being joined by the other coin types in the hoard. Whatever about such speculation, it appears clear that these three hoards are related to one another and to the Woodstown assemblage in terms of their composition, as well as in the fragmentation, weight and nicking of their hacksilver. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that these hoards may ultimately have come from Woodstown.

There are two further hacksilver hoards from the river valleys of the three sisters that deserve brief consideration and speculation in this regard – a nineteenth-century discovery from Derrynahinch, Co. Kilkenny,³⁰ and a second hoard from Mohil (no. 2),³¹ even if one of them is a mid-tenth-century deposition and neither may be classified as true hacksilver hoards. The Derrynahinch hoard, now lost, is from the valley between the Nore and the Suir about 25km north of Woodstown. It was apparently coinless, comprising rings of various types as well as a large quantity of hacksilver that included 'many flat pieces of silver, some square, about the size of a shilling'.³² Its bullion weight is unknown, but on the basis of antiquarian accounts it was clearly a substantial find and it was undoubtedly one of Ireland's largest hacksilver hoards. Indeed, it has been described as 'probably the largest of the lost silver hoards from Ireland',³³ and it may be of note that of the various hoards considered here it is geographically the closest to Woodstown.

Tipperary Historical Journal, 5 (1992), 211, fig. 3. 29 K. Bornholdt Collins, 'The Dunmore Cave [2] hoard and the role of coins in the tenth-century Hiberno-Scandinavian economy' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), p. 19. 30 J. Graves, 'Proceedings of the Kilkenny archaeological society 1853', *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 2 (1852–3), 355–6; J. Sheehan, 'Bullion-rings in Viking-Age Britain and Ireland' in S. Sigmundsson et al. (eds), *Viking settlements and Viking society: papers from the proceedings of the Sixteenth Viking Congress, Reykjavik and Reykholt, 16–23 August 2009* (Reykjavik, 2011), pp 395–6. 31 Bornholdt Collins, 'Dunmore Cave hoard', pp 25–35. 32 Graves, 'Proceedings', 355. The diameter of a mid-nineteenth-century shilling is 24mm. 33 J. Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-Age silver hoards of Ireland' in B. Almqvist and D. Greene (eds), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15–21 August 1973* (Dublin, 1976), p. 50.

The Mohil (no. 2) hoard, which comes fairly close to meeting Hårdh's stipulations of a true hacksilver hoard, appears to have been folded within a high-quality garment hidden in Dunmore Cave. It comprised an arm-ring, a looped rod, a brooch-pin fragment, a small 'droplet', and three pieces of hacksilver, all derived from ingots, as well as over a dozen Anglo-Saxon coins or fragments. 'Droplets' are usually interpreted as casting waste³⁴ and the faces of the Mohil example were flattened by hammering in the same manner as one from Kaupang.³⁵ On the basis of its numismatic element, Bornholdt Collins has dated the hoard's deposition 'to c.965 or soon after',³⁶ which places it well after the likely end of the Woodstown settlement. Even so, it is worth noting that some of its coins had already been in existence for between twenty-five and forty years by the time of the hoard's deposition.

While the deposition date of a mixed hoard designates the termination of the period of currency of each of the individual items in the find, it cannot in the case of its non-numismatic element indicate the length of time that this material was either in existence or in circulation prior to this. It is difficult to assess, therefore, how long non-numismatic silver objects and hacksilver existed and what form(s) they took prior to their final deposition in a coin-dated hoard. Thus the date ranges of some or all of the non-numismatic material in such a hoard may well extend backwards from the *terminus post quem* of the hoard itself, which is determined solely on the basis of the coins. The likely extent of such a time range may be postulated on the basis of the consideration of issues that are both internal and external to the hoard itself, including matters relating to its general nature, its individual components and its geographical location. In this regard, with reference to the Mohil (no. 2) hoard, it is worth noting that the only other occurrences of silver droplets in Mumu are in the Woodstown assemblage, that a parallel for the way in which the Mohil droplet was hammered flat lies in ninth-century Kaupang,³⁷ and that the degree of fragmentation in the Mohil hacksilver lies within the weight-range of the Woodstown material, even though it is not so closely analogous to it as that from Kilmacomma. Together, these points are suggestive of a linkage between particular elements of this hoard and the Woodstown assemblage.

It is a matter of interest that the clearest parallels for the Woodstown material in Mumu lie in these five silver hoards (fig. 9.2) and it seems reasonable to suggest that some or all of the material contained in them accumulated and circulated at Woodstown, even if some of the finds were not deposited until the tenth century. Each of the hoards is provenanced to the broad geographical

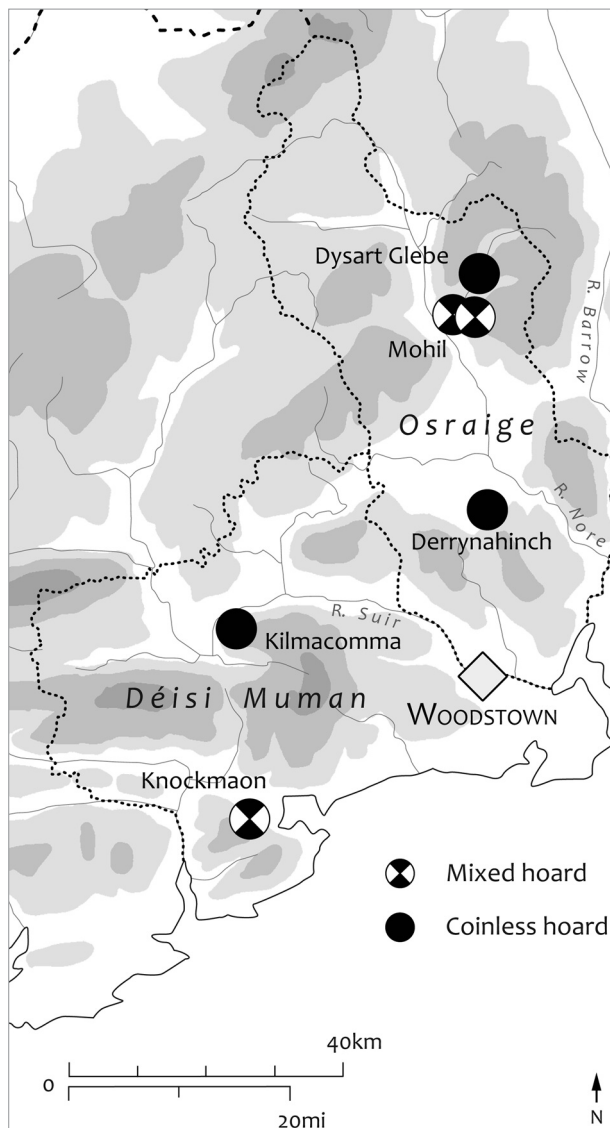
³⁴ These objects are sometimes, confusingly, also referred to in the literature as nodules, globules 'discoidal ingots' or 'bean-shaped ingots'. They appear to have been formed as unintentional by-products of the casting of silver ingots (S.E. Kruse et al., 'Experimental casting of silver ingots', *Historical Metallurgy*, 22:2 (1988), 90–1). ³⁵ Hårdh, 'Hacksilver and ingots', p. 109, fig. 5.9. ³⁶ Bornholdt Collins, 'Dunmore Cave hoard', p. 19. ³⁷ This

locality of the *longphort* and of subsequent Scandinavian settlement at Waterford. The fact that four of the five were deposited in Osraige suggests that this region was the nexus of Waterford's hinterland during the ninth and tenth centuries, and that it had developed a particular economic rapport with the Scandinavians. Moreover, the nature of the hoards, characterized by their highly fragmented hacksilver, implies that this Hiberno-Scandinavian relationship was more economic in its form than that which prevailed in some other areas, where hoards are more often of a type that seems best interpreted in social terms.³⁸ A similar trend is apparent in the hoard evidence from the kingdom of the Southern Uí Néill, which developed strong connections with Scandinavian Dublin in a relationship that, judging from hoard distribution patterns, seems to have excluded adjoining kingdoms. The paucity of recorded hoards from the southern part of Munster's neighbouring kingdom, Laigin, adjoining Osraige, may indicate that this kingdom was excluded from sharing in the economic benefits of Scandinavian Waterford. This leads to the question, given that the Osraige hoards are evidence of exchange, what do the historical sources inform us about the nature of the relationship between the Scandinavians and Osraige?

Osraige formed the easternmost part of Mumu until 859 when, under the leadership of Cearbhall mac Dúnlainge, it submitted to Southern Uí Néill and achieved a degree of independence from Mumu. An ambitious king, who ruled for over forty years from 842, Cearbhall was doubly linked through marriage to Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid, high-king from 846 to 862, of the Southern Uí Néill's Clann Cholmáin, while Máel Sechnaill's successor in the high-kingship from 879 to 916, Flann Sinna, was Cearbhall's nephew.³⁹ Thus, throughout his long reign, Cearbhall was politically well connected to the Southern Uí Néill, a relationship that must have benefited Osraige. In Francis John Byrne's view, he achieved the status of the second most powerful Irish king by the time of his later years.⁴⁰ Perhaps inspired and informed by his Clann Cholmáin connections, he may have implemented complex political and economic approaches in terms of his relationship with the Scandinavians at Woodstown. He both combatted against and allied with Scandinavians depending on circumstances and skilfully played off one group of Scandinavians against another, becoming a significant player in Irish and Scandinavian affairs during the middle and later years of the ninth century. Scandinavian activities in Osraige during this period involved, to some extent, the rivalries between Scandinavian Dublin, Limerick and Waterford, as well as the strategic importance of the area of Waterford harbour, which inevitably drew Osraige into the situation.

is the only parallel known to the author. ³⁸ Sheehan, 'Social and economic integration', pp 181–4. See also Purcell and Sheehan, 'Viking Dublin', where this interpretation is proposed for a group of ornament hoards from Northern Uí Néill. ³⁹ C. Downham, 'The career of Cearbhall of Osraighe', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster*, 1 (2004), 1–18. ⁴⁰ F.J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high kings* (London, 1973), p. 266.

9.2 Ninth- or tenth-century silver hoards of Scandinavian character in Osraige and Déisi Muman, showing the location of Woodstown.



Although he started his career as a subordinate to Mumu's over-kings, Cearbhall mac Dúnlainge developed his standing into a position of influence. In the late 850s, for instance, with help from Scandinavian allies including Óláfr and Ívarr, he inflicted a defeat on other Scandinavian forces in Mumu. In 862 he defeated Rauðulfr and destroyed his *longphort* on the Barrow at Dunrally.⁴¹ Donnchadh Ó Corráin has suggested that his appearance in later Icelandic

⁴¹ Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings and Laois', pp 132–43.

literary sources stems from the popularity of the Fragmentary Annals among Hiberno-Scandinavians, in which his dealings with the Scandinavians are eulogized and from whom knowledge of him was transmitted to Iceland, granting him under the name Kjarvalr Írakonungr the status of an important ancestral figure in *Landnámabók*.⁴² Evidently, he was a king who would have appreciated the prospective benefits of the Woodstown settlement on the threshold of his territory and it is not surprising that Osraige's relationship with this site appears to have had important economic dimensions.

Silver assemblages

It has been noted above that the Woodstown silver constitutes an assemblage rather than a hoard or hoards and that it represents the first recorded find of this type from Ireland. It is expected, however, that future work on important Scandinavian settlements, such as ninth-century Dublin and Linn Duachaill, will result in the discovery of further assemblages of this type. It is striking that archaeological investigations and metal-detecting discoveries made over recent decades in the main silver-using regions of the Viking world – southern Scandinavia, England and Ireland – has resulted in the discovery of a number of silver assemblages. For instance, apart from Woodstown, assemblages have been revealed as significant characteristics of the central places at Kaupang, Uppåkra and Birka, as well as from the winter camp established in 872–3 by the Danish 'great army' at Torksey⁴³ and at ARSNY, the Yorkshire site. In each of these cases it appears that the impressive quantities of dispersed and highly fragmented finds represent random losses from the pools of silver that circulated as currency on a consistent and methodical basis at these settlements. As at Woodstown, most of the silver at these sites occurs in highly fragmented hacksilver form and, significantly, each of the sites has also produced notable quantities of the balance-scale weights that underlay metal-weight economies. The Woodstown silver is more closely related to the assemblages noted above than it is to the majority of hoards from Ireland and this connection is underlined when these weights are taken into account. In short, the broad background of its assemblage indicates that the Woodstown *longphort*, in addition to having apparent links with Osraige, had important and developed economic functions that relate to the wider Viking world.

Much of the hacksilver from Kaupang, Uppåkra and Birka derives from the plough-zone, as is the case at Woodstown, and thus it is datable only to general

42 D. Ó Corráin, 'Viking Ireland: afterthoughts' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, p. 444. 43 Härdh, 'Hacksilver and ingots'; B. Härdh, 'Uppåkra: a centre in south Sweden in the first millennium AD', *Antiquity*, 74 (2000), 640–8; I. Gustin, 'Means of payment and the use of coins in the Viking-Age town of Birka in Sweden: preliminary results', *Current Swedish Archaeology*, 6 (1998), 73–83; M. Blackburn, 'The Viking winter camp at Torksey, 872–3' in M. Blackburn, *Viking coinage and currency in the British Isles* (London, 2011), pp 221–64.

periods of use of these sites. At Kaupang, however, there are some pieces from securely stratified contexts that date to the decades leading up to c.850,⁴⁴ providing evidence for the use of silver as currency there from at least the mid-ninth century onwards. This is evidence for an earlier development of the hacksilver phenomenon in Scandinavia than is generally indicated by the coin-dated hoards alone, a circumstance that has also been suggested above for Ireland. Indeed, on the basis of recent metal-detecting discoveries in England, especially at Torksey and ARSNY, and of the mixed hoard from Croydon, Surrey,⁴⁵ the dating of the first appearance of hacksilver in Viking-Age England may now be at least the early 870s.

Kaupang and Uppåkra, though in south-eastern Norway and western Sweden respectively, are located in regions that may have lain under Danish control during parts of the ninth century. Indeed, Kaupang represented the northern limit of southern Scandinavia's distinctive political, cultural and economic zone, which was centred on modern-day Denmark. Even before the commencement of the Viking Age, southern Scandinavia was more economically developed than northern and western Scandinavia.⁴⁶ Seasonal markets developed there during the early eighth century as a result of trading activities that extended into the southern Baltic and, by the beginning of the ninth century, towns had been established at Hedeby (Haithabu) and Ribe followed by the initiation of coin minting at Hedeby. Southern Scandinavia was a region of urbanization, monetization and hacksilver, and Kaupang and Uppåkra, having silver assemblages with parallels at Woodstown, formed part of this dynamic economic zone. It has previously been suggested, on the basis of links between both the form and the ornamentation of ninth-century silver from southern Scandinavia and Ireland, that the origin of the diagnostic components of the Hiberno-Scandinavian silver-working tradition lies in ninth-century southern Scandinavia.⁴⁷ It now emerges that the closest parallels for the nature of the Woodstown assemblage also lie within this region.

Initially it may seem surprising that it is southern Scandinavia rather than Norway that holds the key to understanding the background to the Woodstown silver assemblage. It is Norway, or at least wherever is understood by *Lochlainn/Lothlind/Laithlinn*, that is referred to in the historical sources as the place having the greatest degree of contact with Ireland during the Viking Age,⁴⁸

44 U. Pedersen and L. Pilø, 'The settlement; artefacts and site periods' in D. Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, trans. J. Hines (Aarhus, 2007), p. 186; Hårdh, 'Hacksilver and ingots', p. 114.

45 N.P. Brooks and J. Graham-Campbell, 'Reflections on the Viking-Age silver hoard from Croydon, Surrey' in N. Brooks (ed.), *Communities and warfare, 700–1400* (London, 2000), pp 69–92. 46 D. Skre, 'Post-substantivist towns and trade, AD600–1000' in Skre (ed.), *Means of exchange*, pp 327–41.

47 J. Sheehan, 'Ireland's Viking-Age hoards: sources and contacts' in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 54–9. 48 C. Etchingham, 'Laithlinn, "Fair Foreigners" and "Dark Foreigners": the identity and provenance of Vikings in ninth-century Ireland' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 80–8.

and archaeological discoveries have demonstrated that the greatest number of Viking-Age graves in Scandinavia with Insular material are from western and south-western Norway.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, there is little evidence to indicate that the Hiberno-Scandinavian silver-working tradition originated in Norway, where silver appears to have been relatively uncommon compared to elsewhere in Scandinavia and where the form and ornamentation of ornaments are quite different from those that characterize the finds from Ireland. Rather, the case for a southern Scandinavian inspiration for the broad-band arm-ring, which typifies the Hiberno-Scandinavian tradition, is strong.⁵⁰ Suggested links between Viking-Age Ireland and the parts of Scandinavia that lay under Danish control during the ninth century are now reinforced by the silver assemblages. What links modern-day Denmark and Norway in the ninth century is Kaupang and its Vestfold hinterland, and it seems likely that it could only have been here that a dynamic originated to bring a developing silver bullion economy, complete with highly fragmented hacksilver, from southern Scandinavia to Ireland. Had the impetus come from south-western or western Norway – from areas such as Rogaland, Sogn, Møre and Trøndelag where Insular metalwork is commonly found in Viking graves – the Hiberno-Scandinavian silver-working tradition would have developed along quite different lines.

Viken may have been a disputed area during the early Viking Age, developing alternate alliances with western Norway and southern Scandinavia. While the initial Scandinavian expansion to Scotland and Ireland may have originated from western Norway, it seems likely that knowledge of this development, and of its potential rewards, quickly reached southern Scandinavia. Dagfinn Skre has proposed that one of the motives behind the foundation of Kaupang by a powerful Danish king at the beginning of the Viking Age was the establishment of a permanent presence in this area, from which the west was being explored.⁵¹ Among the contributions that the Danes brought with them to the mix was a developing silver economic system and a developing background in urbanization, and it is not surprising that both of these features are important characteristics of Viking-Age Ireland.⁵²

49 E. Wamers, 'Insular finds in Viking-Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 37–72. 50 J. Sheehan, 'Hiberno-Scandinavian broad-band arm-rings' in Graham-Campbell, *Cuerdale hoard*, pp 98–9. 51 D. Skre, 'Kaupang: between east and west; between north and south' in D. Skre (ed.), *Things from the town: artefacts and inhabitants in Viking-Age Kaupang* (Aarhus, 2011), p. 446. 52 The author wishes to thank Ian Russell for facilitating his visits to Woodstown, Emer Purcell for discussing Cearbhall mac Dúnlainge with him, and Nick Hogan of the Department of Archaeology, UCC, for preparing figs 9.1 and 9.2.

The Viking glass beads from Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny

JOANNE O'SULLIVAN

Seven glass beads of Scandinavian design and import were found in the limestone cave system at Dunmore, Co. Kilkenny, during archaeological monitoring and rescue excavation carried out in 2004. Showing definitive connections between this part of Ireland and the wider Viking world during the tenth century, these beads are discussed below within their wider cultural context.

Dunmore Cave is a natural limestone system located in north Co. Kilkenny. Historically, this geographical position is of major significance. Much of what is now Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Offaly, Wexford and Wicklow constituted the early medieval kingdom of Leinster, which acted as a wide southern hinterland for Dublin during the Viking Age.¹ Historical accounts from the Irish annals attest to various interactions between incoming Scandinavians and the rulers of Leinster. Such exchanges began during the initial raiding period (*c.* 795–850), when most of these were recorded in a negative light. This type of activity persisted until the mid-ninth century, when alliances and intermarriage began to lead to the development of a hybrid Hiberno-Scandinavian culture in parts of Ireland. After a period of little recorded Viking activity following the Scandinavians' early tenth-century expulsion from Dublin, Waterford was attacked in 914 by 'a great sea-fleet of pagans' and, using the River Suir, large areas of Leinster, bordering on Munster, were sacked.² It is likely that such raids were launched from *longphuirt* within the region, evidence for which has been found at Woodstown, Co. Waterford, on the border of Munster and Leinster,³ as well as at Dunrally, Co. Laois.⁴ Many other such encampments are mentioned in annalistic sources, but have not been definitively archaeologically identified.⁵ Dunmore Cave, like Dunrally Fort, was located within the kingdom of Osraige, a disputed territory that switched its affiliation from Munster to Leinster during the Viking Age.

¹ S. Duffy (ed.), *Atlas of Irish history* (Dublin, 2000), p. 25. ² *AU*, s.a. 913. ³ J. Eogan and E. Shee Twohig (eds), *Cois tSiúire: nine thousand years of human activity in the lower Suir valley* (Dublin, 2011); J. Russell and M.F. Hurley (eds), *Woodstown: a Viking-Age settlement in Co. Waterford* (Dublin, 2014), pp 16–19. ⁴ E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow: Dunrally Fort, a possible Viking *longphort* in Co. Laois', *Archaeology Ireland*, 9:3 (1995), 30–2; E.P. Kelly and J. Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois' in P.G. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society* (Dublin, 1999), pp 123–59. ⁵ C. Downham, *Viking kings of*

It is debatable as to what the presence of glass beads of Scandinavian manufacture and/or import within this area signifies. Such beads were either manufactured in mainland Scandinavia and traded onwards to the west, eventually reaching Ireland, or manufactured in the east, in western Asia and eastern Russia, and then traded westwards along with all-important silver, reaching Scandinavia and farther west to Ireland through the medium of exchange. Were these items that were acquired by the Irish *exotica*, given their distant manufacturing centres, or were they the possessions of distinctively Scandinavian individuals? There are a number of instances of Scandinavian beads occurring in high-status, culturally Irish sites, such as on the crannogs of the Southern Uí Néill, namely at Ballinderry 1 and 2 and Lagore,⁶ reflecting the wider phenomenon of the acquisition of Scandinavian artefacts within such areas.⁷ Within Leinster, however, there do not appear to be any recorded examples of such obviously Viking artefacts found in settlements of distinctly Irish character. The only instance of *definitively* Scandinavian beads in use there during the Viking Age (outside Dublin) is the find under consideration here. In comparison, two findspots in Munster (Glencurran Cave, Co. Clare and Woodstown, Co. Waterford), one in Connacht (Mannin Bay, Co. Galway), one in Airgialla (Emyvale, Co. Monaghan), six in Ulaid (Rathlin Island, Ballymena, Clough and Portglenone in Co. Antrim, at 'a crannog near Toome' and Dromore, Co. Down), and four in the territory of the Southern Uí Néill (Ballinderry 1, Co. Westmeath, Ballinderry 2, Co. Offaly and Lagore, Co. Meath) have yielded glass beads of Scandinavian type.

DUNMORE CAVE

Dunmore Cave is the findspot of the second largest composite glass bead necklace of Scandinavian import found in Ireland outside Viking Dublin, the largest being that found at Glencurran Cave, Co. Clare.⁸ Dunmore therefore has the potential to reveal much about the use of distinctively Viking beads of both gold foil and ring type (see below for their classification) in Viking-Age Ireland. A tourist attraction for over forty years, Dunmore Cave has been investigated archaeologically on a number of occasions in recent times, most notably in 1973

Britain and Ireland (Edinburgh, 2007), pp 13, 42. 6 See examples mentioned in H. O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1', *PRIA*, 43C (1936), 103–239; H. O'Neill Hencken, 'Lagore crannog: an Irish royal residence of the seventh to tenth century AD', *PRIA*, 53C (1950), 142; C. Newman, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 2, Co. Offaly: pre-crannog early medieval horizon', *JIA*, 11 (2002), 99–124. 7 E.P. Kelly, 'Observations on Irish lake dwellings' in C. Karkov and R. Farrell (eds), *Studies in Insular art and archaeology* (Oxford, 1991), p. 86; J. Graham-Campbell and J. Sheehan, 'Viking-Age gold and silver from Irish crannogs and other watery places', *JIA*, 18 (2009), 77–93. 8 J. O'Sullivan, 'Viking beads' in M. Dowd (ed.), *Excavations in Glencurran Cave, the Burren: Bronze Age ritual, early medieval occupation*

when the finds included nine silver coins dating to c.930;⁹ in 1999 when a number of finds of a later tenth-century date, but still of a Viking nature, were recovered;¹⁰ and in 2004 when the seven glass beads discussed here were recovered during rescue excavation carried out in anticipation of much-needed lighting upgrades in the cave.

The location of the cave, as previously mentioned, is an important factor in understanding how the beads came to be deposited there. It is situated between the Viking-Age towns of Dublin and Waterford, both of which were significant settlements in terms of population and economy by the late tenth century. This is the period when the Dunmore beads are most likely to have been deposited, on the basis of the bead types represented. Proximity to the overland route between these important centres may explain other Viking activity at Dunmore Cave, including a raid there in 930 that is recorded in a number of sources.¹¹

The monitoring and rescue excavation carried out in 2004, like previous investigations, has not yielded any definitive evidence for raiding activity at the cave, despite the large number of human remains noted and recovered since the late seventeenth century.¹² Such remains certainly indicate that the cave witnessed the deposition of a large number of individuals, whether as a result of a single event or a number of events, but what such events may have constituted is not entirely clear.

What is evidenced from the material recovered to date is the repeated use of the cave for the deposition, either intentional or otherwise, of items of market and personal value. These include two silver hoards, other items of Viking silver, other beads, ringed pins, a portion of a shale/lignite bracelet and a bronze pin.¹³ Such items represent a large array of valuable objects, which together indicate the importance of Dunmore Cave during the early medieval period. The following discussion will focus on the glass beads recovered during the 2004 excavation.

THE BEADS

Seven glass beads were recovered during Dowd's programme of archaeological monitoring and excavation, as described and discussed below. These beads were all found in close proximity to one another (allowing for the high level of post-depositional disturbance) within the Market Cross chamber, along with

and Viking activities in the west of Ireland, forthcoming. ⁹ D.P. Drew and D. Huddart, 'Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny: a reassessment', *PRIA*, 80B (1980), 1–23. ¹⁰ M.A. Dowd et al., 'Recent archaeological discoveries in Dunmore Cave, County Kilkenny: further questions regarding Viking activity at the site', *Old Kilkenny Review*, 59 (2007), 7. ¹¹ Ibid. ¹² Ibid., 7, 13–14. ¹³ Ibid.; Drew and Huddart, 'Dunmore Cave'; K. Bornholdt Collins, 'The Dunmore Cave [2] hoard and the role of coins in the tenth-century Hiberno-Scandinavian economy' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), p. 19;

contemporaneous human remains, which were scattered in the shallow soil deposits of the chamber floor. This echoes the large number of human bone fragments found in the same area previously by Drew and Huddart.¹⁴ It also raises the question as to whether these beads were associated with the human remains, adorning them even at death. Unfortunately, the disturbance within the cave cannot allow us to confirm this, but it remains a distinct possibility. The Market Cross chamber is located deep within the cave system and is one of the highest chambers at Dunmore. Other items of personal ornamentation were also recovered during the 2004 excavation, including the ringed pins and bracelet of shale/lignite mentioned previously, but these were not found in direct association with the beads. Instead, they were all recovered from the main chamber. This does not necessarily mean that the items were not deposited together, since animal and human activity within the cave has caused disturbance, but caution must be taken when discussing this entire assemblage in context.

Gold foil beads

Six of the beads may be categorized under the broad banner of 'gold foil', with two of these (04E1517:10 and 04E1517:11) exhibiting traces of true gold foil decoration and the other four (04E1517:06–9) identifiable as simulated gold foil, with traces of olive- and amber-coloured glass layers still intact (pl. 14). Two beads found by Drew and Huddart are identical to these seven examples and were recovered from the same area.¹⁵ All nine beads of this type from Dunmore Cave are likely to have formed part of a single piece of personal ornament. Gold (or silver) foil beads are found as single or segmented examples, both usually of 'layered' construction but rarely as blown, single-layer beads. These consist of true foil or simulated foil types. Often the difference is obvious only when the two bead types are observed simultaneously. In the case of true foil beads, a layer of thin gold or silver foil is applied to the outermost layer of glass. Simulated gold foil beads differ in that the outer layer of glass is of an olive colour (over a white or cream base), creating the illusion of gold or silver colour. Johan Callmer classifies these beads as types E140, E161 and E110, which he terms 'oriental imports', being beads that were imported into Scandinavia from Russia and western Asia. These beads date to both the early and the late Viking period, with an increase in the true foil bead type in the late ninth century.¹⁶

The foliated-glass bead assemblage from Dunmore Cave, recovered by Dowd and by Drew and Huddart respectively, belongs to the rare but significant occurrence of gold foil (true and simulated) beads in Ireland.¹⁷ Two other find

J. Sheehan, 'Viking-Age artefacts from caves' in M.A. Dowd (ed.), *Specialist studies in Irish cave archaeology*, forthcoming. ¹⁴ Dowd et al., 'Recent archaeological discoveries', 9–11. ¹⁵ Drew and Huddart, 'Dunmore Cave', 16–18. ¹⁶ J. Callmer, *Trade beads and bead trade in Scandinavia, c.800–1000AD* (Stockholm, 1977), p. 89. ¹⁷ Drew and Huddart, 'Dunmore

locations of beads of this type from Ireland are known, namely Glencurran Cave, Co. Clare,¹⁸ and the Kilmainham/Islandbridge graveyard in Dublin.¹⁹ Of these, only those found at Kilmainham/Islandbridge may be linked to a probable burial, since the assemblage from Glencurran Cave is probably a cache or composite set of objects deposited for later retrieval. The value in antiquity of highly ornamented objects such as these cannot be readily determined, but they are likely to have been worth considerably more than the single dirham quoted by Ibn Fadlan, the tenth-century Arab traveller, as the price for one undecorated monochrome bead.²⁰ A large cache of decorated glass beads had potentially a high marketable value.

The ring bead

The remaining bead (04E1517:04) is of semi-translucent, monochrome mid-blue ground (pl. 15), similar to one recovered from the chamber previously, in 1949.²¹ Despite a lack of diagnostic decoration, the bead's shape is informative, allowing it to be categorized as a ring bead, given the ratio between the proportions of the perforation and those of the bead. Beads of this shape are known from Scandinavia and other areas during the Viking Age, including the early town of Hedeby,²² and are dated to the early part of the Viking period.²³ What indicates Scandinavian manufacture of the bead most of all are the flat 'faces' apparent at each perforated end. Such an even finish was probably achieved by the technique of 'marvering', whereby the bead, while still malleable, was pressed firmly against a hard, cold surface. This flatness could also have been achieved by filing or wearing down the surface to the desired flatness. A near-identical parallel for the Dunmore Cave bead is on record from a crannog near Toome, Co. Antrim (NMI, 1948:69), as well as in a number of examples from the Vestfold region in Norway.²⁴

Cave', 16, 18. 18 M.A. Dowd, 'Living and dying in Glencurran Cave', *Archaeology Ireland*, 21:1 (2007), 36–9; M.A. Dowd, 'Middle and late Bronze Age ritual activity at Glencurran Cave, Co. Clare' in N. Finlay et al. (eds), *Bann flakes to Bushmills: papers in honour of Peter C. Woodman* (Oxford, 2009), pp 86–96; O'Sullivan, 'Viking beads'. 19 E.C.R. Armstrong, 'Two Irish finds of glass beads of the Viking period', *Man*, 21 (1921), 71–3; J. Boe, *Norse antiquities in Ireland* (Oslo, 1940), p. 45; C.S. Briggs, 'A neglected Viking burial from Kilmainham', *Medieval Archaeology*, 29 (1987), 94–108; S. Harrison and R. Ó Floinn, *Irish Viking graves and grave goods*, forthcoming. 20 H.M. Smyser, 'Ibn Fadlan's account of the Rus with some commentary and some allusions to Beowulf' in J.B.J. Bessinger and R. Creed (eds), *Franciplegius: medieval and linguistic studies in honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr* (New York, 1965), p. 92. 21 Dowd et al., 'Recent archaeological discoveries', 9. 22 P. Steppuhn, *Die Glasfunde von Haithabu* (Neumünster, 1998). 23 Callmer, *Trade beads and bead trade*, p. 80. 24 J. O'Sullivan, 'Viking-Age glass beads of Ireland and their north Atlantic context' (PhD, UCC, 2011).

DISCUSSION

The concealment of portable wealth at Dunmore Cave is echoed by previous finds from this location, including that of a rich garment, which was apparently deliberately concealed behind a large rock,²⁵ as well as two silver hoards.²⁶ None of these can be shown to have been in direct association with the deposition of the glass beads, but their presence suggests that the cave was a known and established place for the concealment of valuables. The other items of personal ornament found within the cave during the 2004 excavations can be interpreted as items of value for such concealment, despite their otherwise personal nature. The presence of a large amount of human bone within the cave certainly complicates the picture and raises the possibility that these items represent grave-goods within some sort of Scandinavian burial context of the type represented at Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry.²⁷ The evidence, unfortunately, is unclear and does not allow us to advance a definitive explanation. What one can say on the subject of these diagnostic beads is that they represent a significant assemblage of personal ornament of probable tenth- or early eleventh-century Scandinavian import – an assemblage that served as a statement of identity for Scandinavians and their allies in early medieval Ireland.

CONCLUSION

The glass beads found within the Market Cross cavern at Dunmore Cave during the 2004 investigations are of a diagnostic nature and yield much information regarding the use of distinctive Scandinavian ornament in an Irish context. Whether they served as valuable trade items with an intrinsic economic value or as items of personal value to the individual who last owned them, they have much to tell about the level of Scandinavian imports into Viking Ireland, especially outside the Dublin context.²⁸

²⁵ Bornholdt Collins, 'Dunmore Cave', p. 19. ²⁶ Sheehan, 'Viking-Age artefacts'. ²⁷ M. Connolly et al., *Underworld: death and burial in Cloghermore Cave, Co. Kerry* (Bray, 2005).

²⁸ The author wishes to express thanks to Marion Dowd and John Sheehan for their assistance and to Marion Dowd and Thorsten Kahlert for permission to include the images used.

Viking Limerick and its hinterland

BRIAN HODKINSON

The Vikings established themselves on the lower Shannon in the early ninth century at Athlunkard, a *longphort* about 3km upstream of present-day Limerick. The site was identified in 1998 by Edmond O'Donovan and Eamonn Kelly, but this identification was subsequently queried by Michael Gibbons. To date no excavation has taken place on the site, though a few Viking-Age finds are known from it and nearby areas.¹

About a century later the Vikings or Ostmen moved downstream on to King's Island. There is a strong local tradition that St Munchin's, a medieval parish church on the island at the northern end of the later walled city, was the cathedral church of the Ostmen and was founded by Munchin himself.² If correct, then this would suggest that there was an early monastic site on King's Island and that the Viking town, farther to the south, was founded alongside it; this is similar to the relationship between the Viking fort of Dublin and the monastic settlement of Dubhlinn. There is, however, no archaeological evidence for such an early site and the documentary evidence starts with an early thirteenth-century inquisition into lands belonging to the church of Limerick.³ The tradition goes back to the mid-seventeenth century and was first recorded by Sir James Ware.⁴ It is this writer's opinion that the story may be a garbled understanding of events before and after the Cromwellian siege of 1651. The medieval bishop's palace lay immediately to the north of St Munchin's over a common boundary.⁵ In the Protestant line the bishopric was abolished by Cromwell and the palace let out, with the result that when the bishopric was restored in 1660 Bishop Synge had to find new premises in which to live. The medieval and early modern bishops were effectively parishioners of St Munchin's and presumably worshipped there on many occasions. It is but a short step for the bishop's chair within the church to be called a *cathedra* and the church a cathedral.

1 E.P. Kelly and E. O'Donovan, 'A Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard, Co. Clare', *Archaeology Ireland*, 12:4 (1998), 13–16; M. Gibbons, 'Athlunkard: a reassessment of the proposed Viking fortress in Fairyhill td, Co. Clare', *The Other Clare*, 29 (2005), 22–5. 2 M. Lenihan, *Limerick: its history and antiquities* (Limerick, 1866), p. 542. 3 J. McCaffrey (ed.), *The Black Book of Limerick: with introduction and notes* (Dublin, 1907), p. 26. See also *ibid.*, p. 28 for a second inquisition. 4 J. Ware, *The antiquities and history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1705), p. 141. 5 E. O'Flaherty, *Limerick* (Dublin, 2010), map 6.

Despite the fact that Vikings figure prominently in annalistic sources, there is very little physical evidence for their presence on King's Island.⁶ Hiberno-Norse-style sunken houses similar to those from Dublin, Waterford and York have been excavated, but the dating of them to the twelfth century is a good hundred years or more later than elsewhere.⁷ Other than that, there is very little. It can be argued that most of the archaeological excavations over the last twenty-five years have actually ringed the original Norse settlement and that the few pieces of work carried out within the core have been either keyhole excavations or located on the main street of the medieval town, which has been disturbed by later medieval cellars. While plausible, this does not account for the complete absence of chance Viking finds from the city; even the recent main drainage scheme that emptied the Abbey river to allow its bed to be excavated produced little more than a coin of King Knut and a piece of possible Viking metalwork.⁸

In order to understand how the Viking town developed, it is necessary to use conjecture rather than solid fact. Some years ago the present writer put forward a model for the development of the early town, which seems to have gained acceptance.⁹ It proposed that the primary focus of the town was on the harbour area – the present Merchant's Quay – and that the main street of the town developed behind the properties fronting on to the harbour. This survives today as Crosbie Row and Courthouse Lane, while its line can also be traced within the present grounds of St Mary's Cathedral. The town was surrounded by a rampart and this enclosure was to form what later became the middle ward, as described in the Civil Survey of 1654.¹⁰

To the north of the town was an open area in which the Viking assembly site was situated and which probably served as a market area as well. This dual nature of Limerick is noted in several annalistic references. Because Viking governance centred on the *þing*, 'assembly', it is believed that this area became a magnet for subsequent power shifts with a Dalcassian palace being succeeded by an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle and then the royal castle of King John. The area was eventually enclosed and became the northern suburb of the Civil Survey. With the arrival of the Anglo-Normans at the end of the twelfth century, new infrastructure in the form of Baal's Bridge, Thomond Bridge and particularly King John's Castle meant that the old main street lost its significance and that the Mary Street and Nicholas Street axis became the main thoroughfare of the medieval town.

6 See the annalistic sources quoted, for example, in M.A. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), pp 101–8. 7 C. Walsh, 'Sunken buildings' in M. Hurley et al. (eds), *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford: excavations, 1986–92* (Waterford, 1999), pp 45–53. 8 E. O'Donovan, *Preliminary catalogue of archaeological artefacts from the Limerick main drainage* (Dublin, 2001). 9 B. Hodkinson, 'The topography of pre-Norman Limerick', *NMAJ*, 42 (2002), 1–6, expanded in 'The medieval city of Limerick' in L. Irwin et al. (eds), *Limerick: history and society* (Dublin, 2009); O'Flaherty, *Limerick*, p. 1. 10 R. Simington (ed.), *The Civil Survey, Co. Limerick* (Dublin, 1938), pp 418–39.

King John reserved the town and cantred of the Ostmen to himself, while parcelling out the remainder of what was to become the county of Limerick to his barons. There is no contemporary extent of the cantred and, even if there was, it is of course open as to whether this early thirteenth-century cantred was coextensive with the area controlled by the Ostmen a century or two earlier. Adrian Empey has suggested that it consisted of the eastern part of the rural deanery of Limerick, but John Bradley has a more extensive area in his reconstruction map of Hiberno-Norse settlement. South of the Shannon he accepts Empey's suggestion of the eastern part of the deanery as the core area, but includes the rest of the deanery as possibly settled. North of the river he extends the cantred to the diocesan boundary and adds Tradree or the western half of Bunratty Lower barony as an area of possible settlement.¹¹

In an earlier paper this writer has suggested that some of the cantred's twelfth-century limits were fossilized in the Limerick diocesan boundary established by the synod of Ráith Bressail in 1111.¹² The guiding light of that assembly was Bishop Gilla Espuic of Limerick and, presumably, the area of his jurisdiction coincided with that of the local king. According to the one surviving text of the synod, Quin in Killaloe diocese formed one boundary of Limerick but, in the same paper, this writer has queried this, largely on the grounds that there is no trace of a transfer of jurisdiction from Limerick to Killaloe in the documentary sources. Once one removes Quin and associated parishes out of the equation, then the limit on the north side of the river is, unsurprisingly, that of the present diocese at the Bunratty river. South of the Shannon the Killaloe and Emly diocesan boundaries form the eastern limit, while the southern boundary is less clear, but may include Mungret parish.

What was the nature of this cantred? Was it an area controlled by the Ostmen but farmed by the Irish paying tribute, or was it an area farmed by the Ostmen themselves, or a mixture of both? There is no unequivocal evidence. What little we do have, both historical and place-name, is late and not necessarily applicable to the tenth and eleventh centuries. There is another local tradition that the people of the Park area immediately east of the city are of Scandinavian extraction.¹³ To date, this writer has uncovered just two documentary references to possible rural settlement of the Ostmen. An inquisition of 1224 refers to a road leading from the town to *villa Ostmannorum* with no indication of where that might be. The other is a reference to the land of Godric somewhere in the Groody river area in a charter of the Lord John of 1185. As a counterbalance and

11 C.A. Empey, 'The settlement of the kingdom of Limerick' in J. Lydon (ed.), *England and Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1981), pp 1–25 and n. 18; J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland' in J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin OSA* (Kilkenny, 1988), pp 49–78 and fig 3:2.

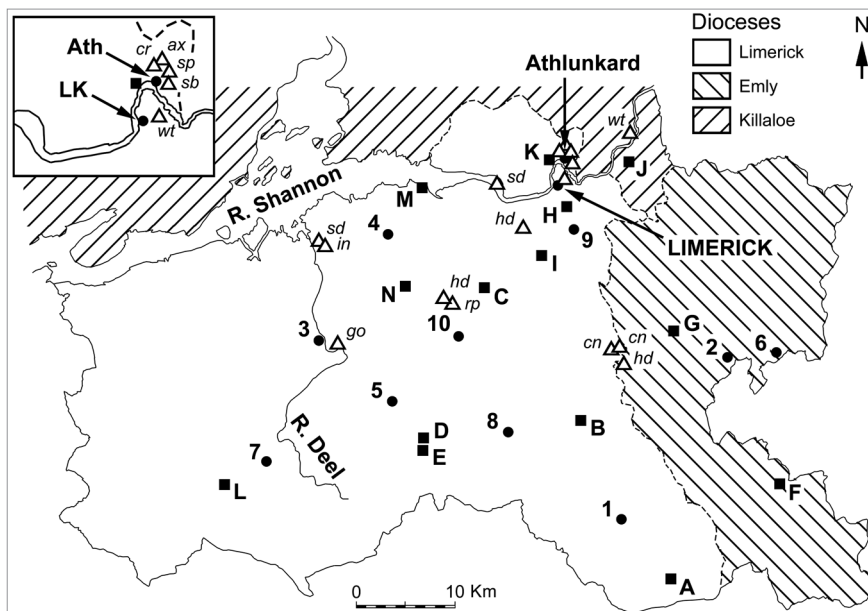
12 B. Hodkinson, 'A history and archaeology of the liberties of Limerick to c.1650', *NMAJ*, 47 (2007), 39–66. 13 P. Harrold, 'The Park Danes', *Old Limerick Journal*, 12 (1982), 14–17.

under the assumption it reflects earlier conditions, an early thirteenth-century grant of ploughlands in the Mungret area by the citizens of Limerick to the church included the *nativi* who worked the land. Presumably these *nativi* were Irish *betaghs* because the Ostmen were free citizens who had the benefit of English law.¹⁴ Locally there has been an assumption that, as at Dublin and Waterford, the Anglo-Normans expelled the Ostmen from the town and that the latter possibly settled in the area of the southern suburb known as Irishtown. There is, however, no evidence for this and the present writer has argued that the name Irishtown reflects events in the aftermath of the Cromwellian siege of 1651.¹⁵

Place-names are another potential indicator of Norse settlement and can be divided into two main groups – those that contain Norse personal names and those that contain the word for ‘Foreigner’, *Gall*. Of course there are major reservations to be made about both groups. Norse personal names were adopted by the Irish, while the word for Foreigner could equally well refer to Anglo-Normans or, where the first instance of the name is quite late, other groups of settlers. Then there is also the problem of correct identification of the meaning of the name itself. With these caveats the following list comprises all names with a possible Norse origin as given by Ó Maolfabhail and Mac Spealáin, the two main Limerick place-name authorities, and in a recent article by Curtin.¹⁶ There is some disagreement between the two main authorities: for instance, Mac Spealáin treats the *Gall* element of Knocknagaul as Foreigner, while Ó Maolfabhail gives ‘standing stones’. The only other place-name that contains a definite Norse element is Laxweir, the salmon weir just above Limerick city at Corbally. However, if it were situated in northern England, Rinekirk Point in Mellon townland on the Shannon would also be considered as a possible second weir, because Ardcanney parish church, *kirk* lies nearby in the same townland and is believed to be an early church.¹⁷ Curtin suggests Strand village. On the opposite side of the Shannon there is no corresponding place-name book for Co. Clare, but a perusal of all the townland names in Bunratty Lower barony has produced none with immediately obvious Norse origins.

Townland names with possible Norse personal names are as follows according to Ó Maolfabhail: 1. Ballynamolough (Ulfr/Woulfe), 2. Carrickittle (Ketill/Caitill),

14 K. Nicholls, ‘Inquisitions of 1224 from the miscellanea of the exchequer’, *AH*, 27 (1972), 106; McCaffrey, *Black Book*, p. 103 for both references. 15 B. Hodkinson, ‘The origin and dating of the name of Limerick’s Irishtown’, *NMAJ*, 49 (2009), 1–5. 16 A. Ó Maolfabhail, *Logainneacha na hÉireann Imleabhar I: Contae Luimnigh* (Dublin, 1990); G. Mac Spealáin, ‘Notes on place-names in the city and liberties of Limerick’, *NMAJ*, 3 (1942–3), 98–117; G. Mac Spealáin, ‘Some interesting place-names in County Limerick’, *NMAJ*, 3 (1942–3), 144–61; G. Mac Spealáin, ‘Place-names of County Limerick: barony of Coshma’, *NMAJ*, 4 (1944–5), 152–63; G. Mac Spealáin, ‘Place names of County Limerick: barony of Coshlea’, *NMAJ*, 5 (1946–9), 85–95; G. Curtin, ‘Evidence for Viking settlement in County Limerick? An interpretation of place-names and folklore’, *NMAJ*, 51 (2011), 152–4. 17 See the Monasticon Hibernicum website at <http://monasticon.celt.dias.ie/>.



11.1 Map of Co. Limerick and parts of south Clare, showing place-names mentioned in the text and the location of all archaeological finds whose find-spot can be localized. Key to finds: ax = axe; cn = coin(s); cr = coulter; go = gold band; hd = hoard; in = ingot; rp = ring pin; sb = spear butt; sd = sword; sp = spearhead; wt = weight (map prepared by Dan Tietzsch-Tyler).

3. Cloghanarold (Haraldr), 4. Croker's Park/Ballyhitricke (Sigtryggr), 5. Doonbeirne (Bjorn), 6. Garryheakin (Hákon/Heicin), 7. Gorteenreynard (Ragnar), 8. Howardstown (Sigurðr) and 9. Rathurd (Sigurðr). In addition Mac Spéaláin gives *villa Tursteyn* (Þorsteinn/Thurstan) for 10. Dunnaman, which Ó Maolfabhail seems to have overlooked. Townland names with the *Gall* element are: A. Ballynegaule, B. Ballingayrou, C. Ballygeale (for which Ó Maolfabhail has 'town of the hostage'), D. Ballyguileataggle, E. Ballyguilebeg, F. Galbally, G. Galboola, H. Galvone, I. Knocknagaul and J. Mountshannon (Baile an Ghaill). Other names with Norse associations are K. Laxweir, L. Strand, M. Rinekirk and N. Ballylongford.

The only other available evidence is the body of archaeological finds with Scandinavian traits from the county. There are two coin hoards, one from Adare and one unlocalized within the county, as well as a mixed hoard from Mungret and a hoard without coin from Carraig Aille. Two kite brooches were found somewhere in the vicinity of Limerick city and there were single finds of a ringed pin from Adare, an arm-ring of uncertain provenance, a gold ingot from Askeaton, a gold band from near Rathkeale and two finds of single Anglo-Saxon coins from Lough Gur. There were two swords, one from the Shannon near Cooperhill and one from the River Deel at Askeaton. On the Clare side there is

a pair of coins excavated from Beal Boru and three arm-rings from the Shannon. Then there are the finds from Athlunkard and its vicinity – a spearhead and butt, a coulter and an iron ring from the site itself, as well as two weights from Corbally and Summerhill and an axe from the Shannon near St Thomas' Island.¹⁸

When all the evidence presented above is plotted on a map (fig. 11.1), the first observation that can be made is that, barring Gorteenreynard, Strand village and Cloghanarold, everything in Co. Limerick is east of the River Deel. The Deel, however, forms the eastern boundary of Cloghanarold townland and it is worth noting that, according to Curtin, Strand lies on the Norse-derived Hernik river (neither named on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey), which passes through Gorteenreynard townland on its way to its eventual confluence with the Deel. Place-names with a personal name element are fairly evenly spread across Co. Limerick.

In conclusion then, while archaeological evidence for Vikings in Limerick city is elusive, there are sufficient annalistic references to demonstrate an important Viking town. There is a scattering of evidence to suggest that the hinterland of the town, at its maximum, extended as far west as the Deel valley in Co. Limerick, with settlement spread across the remainder of the county, away from the uplands, in the baronies of Ownybeg and Coonagh. What is not clear, however, is whether or not the settlement represented local focal points for tributary payments exacted from the Irish in the surrounding area, or whether the Norse themselves farmed the land. By contrast, the northern side of the Shannon in Co. Clare is devoid of evidence for Viking activity, except in the district around Athlunkard.

18 J. Sheehan, 'Viking-Age hoards from Munster: a regional tradition' in M. Monk and J. Sheehan (eds), *Early medieval Munster: archaeology, history and society* (Cork, 1998), pp 147–63; M. Cahill and R. Ó Floinn, 'Two silver kite brooches from near Limerick city', *NMAJ*, 36 (1995), 65–82; Kelly and O'Donovan, 'Viking *longphort* near Athlunkard'.

My thanks to Dan Tietzsch Tyler for drawing the map.

The break-up of Dál Riata and the rise of Gallgoídil¹

CLARE DOWNHAM

This essay is divided into two parts. The first is devoted to the end of the transmarine polity of Dál Riata in the context of Viking activity in the ninth and tenth centuries. The second part is concerned with the origins and development of the Gallgoídil, a label that translates as ‘foreigner-Gaels’ and came eventually to be assigned to the region of Galloway in south-west Scotland. The exact nature of that society and its leadership has been debated. It will be argued here that the dismemberment of Dál Riata created new cultural frontiers in the Viking Age between Vikings, mixed-culture Gallgoídil and Gaels. It will be suggested that Gallgoídil initially developed as a distinct group occupying some of the former territories of Dál Riata in Britain and Ireland before this hybrid polity shifted southwards into what is now Ayrshire and Galloway. Nevertheless the limited nature of the historical sources means that such theories must remain speculative. This is simply a new way of looking at old evidence.

One of the main historical sources for early medieval Dál Riata is *Míniugud senchasa shēr nAlban* (‘An explanation of the history of the men of Alba’). This textual palimpsest is part foundation legend, part military census. As it stands, the *Míniugud* seems to have been compiled in the tenth century from seventh- and/or eighth-century materials.² The text identifies three major subgroups of Dál Riata: Cenél nÓengusso, Cenél nGabráin and Cenél Loairn. A genealogical source, *Cethri prímchenéla Dáil Riata*, datable to the years 697x719, identifies (as the title implies) another kindred, Cenél Comgaill, among the principal subgroups of Dál Riata.³ Other major sources for tracing the early history of Dál Riata are the Irish chronicles and hagiographical literature, including Adomnán’s *Vita sancti Columbae*.

According to *Míniugud senchasa shēr nAlban*, the men of Dál Riata inhabited Muirbolg (an area along the north Antrim coast), but its focus is on the lands of Dál Riata in Britain. The Irish territories of Dál Riata receive further mention in Irish chronicles and the Tripartite Life of St Patrick.⁴ Its area roughly

¹ This essay was presented as a paper to the Scottish Society for Northern Studies conference in Ardbeg Distillery, Islay, 13 Apr. 2012. I should like to thank Shane McLeod, Fiona Edmonds and David Dumville for their comments and corrections. ² D.N. Dumville, ‘Ireland and north Britain in the earlier Middle Ages: contexts for *Míniugud senchasa shēr nAlban*’ in C. Ó Baoill and N. McGuire (eds), *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 2000* (Aberdeen, 2002), p. 206. ³ D.N. Dumville, ‘*Cethri prímchenéla Dáil Riata*’, *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 20 (2000), 170–91. ⁴ Dumville, ‘Ireland and north Britain’, p. 189; *The Tripartite Life of St*

corresponded with north Co. Antrim from Bushmills to Larne. The territories of British Dál Riata can be identified from texts, including Adomnán's *Vita sancti Columbae* and the *Míniugud*, as stretching southwards from Eigge to Kintyre and reaching inland as far as Druim Alban. In the eyes of contemporaries, Dál Riata was one polity, with the sea connecting territories rather than dividing them. Cenél nÓengusso held lands in both Irish and British Dál Riata.⁵ James Fraser has suggested that the Uí Ibdag dynasty of Dál Fiatach (based around Strangford Lough) and Cenél nÓengusso claimed common ancestry.⁶ In the *Míniugud*, Cenél nÓengusso is identified as the dominant kindred of Islay. Cenél nGabráin is identified with Kintyre and, according to the *Míniugud*, it held lordship at one time over Cenél Comgaill (Cawal) 'and its islands', which may have included Bute and Arran. Cenél nGabráin also had connections with Skye, represented in *Cethri prímchenéla* and in legend.⁷ Although Skye lay within a Pictish cultural zone, Cenél nGabráin may have attempted to wield authority there and in northern parts of Dál Riata.⁸ This is hinted at in Adomnán's *Vita sancti Columbae*, as a member of Cenél nGabráin was miraculously punished for persecuting a farmer in Ardnamurchan.⁹ Cenél Loairn can be linked with the mainland district of Lorne, including the fortress of Dunollie. This dynasty also held control over one or more of the Hebridean islands, though precise identification is lacking.¹⁰

The *Míniugud* in its current form reflects a time when the Irish and British portions of Dál Riata were politically separate. When this separation occurred has been a subject of speculation. In 741 Óengus son of Fergus, king of the Picts, 'hammered' Dál Riata. An attack was led in the same year by Indrechtach, king of the Cruithni (Dál nAraide), against Dál Riata, culminating in a victory at Druim Cathmail. The two-pronged attack suggests that British and Irish Dál Riata had remained unified until this point. Indrechtach's attack may have opportunistically exploited the vulnerability of Irish Dál Riata while British Dál Riata bore the brunt of Óengus' force.¹¹ Despite this cataclysm, obits of kings of Dál Riata continue to be recorded in Irish chronicles in the late eighth century. Their names do not fit well with later lists of kings of Dál Riata from north Britain who may have ruled under Pictish suzerainty. The possibility that Irish chronicles record kings of Dál Riata in Ireland who did not rule in Britain may provide a simple solution to this conundrum.¹² Kings of Irish Dál Riata may

Patrick, ed. and trans. W. Stokes, 2 vols (London, 1887), i, pp 160–8. See *AU*, s.a. 731. 5 Dumville, 'Ireland and north Britain', p. 206. 6 J.E. Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland: Scotland to 795* (Edinburgh, 2009), pp 159–60. 7 Ibid., pp 204–6; D.N. Dumville, 'Political organisation in Dál Riata' in F. Edmonds and P. Russell (eds), *Tome: studies in medieval Celtic history and law in honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards* (Woodbridge, 2011), p. 48. 8 Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St Columba*, trans. R. Sharpe (London, 1995), pp 293–4, n. 147. 9 Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1961), ii, § 22. 10 Ibid., § 45; Adomnán of Iona, pp 347–8, nn 342–3. 11 *AU*, s.a. 741. See Dumville, 'Political organisation', pp 46–7. 12 D. Broun, 'Pictish kings, 761–839: integration

have remained outside the grasp of Pictish rulers and retained a separate identity. The British and Irish portions of Dál Riata may have alternatively remained one polity into the early Viking Age.¹³

The arrival of Vikings in the Hebrides is well attested. The Annals of Ulster report the 'devastation of all the islands of Britain' under the year 794, which may refer to the Scottish islands. Soon afterwards Vikings undertook a series of raids on the church of Iona – including the years 802, 806 and 825.¹⁴ It is often assumed that the raids were closely followed by occupation and settlement of the Hebrides, although this need not have happened immediately. The Isles provided a chain of communication and stopping-off points for Scandinavian raiders and traders who plied the seaways from Norway to the Irish Sea. When Vikings extended their ambitions to Ireland in the late 830s with the foundation of *longphuirt*, secure possession of the islands around Argyll may have been a strategic precondition. It may be no surprise that tensions between Vikings and the rulers of Scotland's western seaboard came to a head at this time.¹⁵

In 839 a famous battle was fought in which Áed son of Boanta and two sons of Óengus, overking of the Picts, were killed by Vikings, which presumably weakened Pictish control along Scotland's western seaboard.¹⁶ This was followed by a report in the Annals of Saint-Bertin for the year 847 that Vikings took control of the islands around Ireland.¹⁷ This may mark the Viking conquest of the Inner Hebrides and the break-up of Dál Riata.¹⁸ Written sources are silent as to how Gaelic islanders reacted to the arrival of Vikings. They do not state whether Viking colonization was marked by wholesale emigration or massacre, whether Viking settlers simply replaced an existing elite, or any range of possible scenarios in between. To answer these questions scholars have turned to archaeological and onomastic evidence for clues.

PLACE-NAMES IN FORMER BRITISH DÁL RIATA

Whether the division of lands in Dál Riata proceeded along the line of pre-existing units or represented a complete reconfiguration of boundaries is unclear. As Alex Woolf has pointed out, Cowal and Lorne take their name from the

with Dál Riata or separate development?' in S.M. Foster (ed.), *The St Andrews sarcophagus* (Dublin, 1998), pp 77–9; *AU*, s.a. 989. 13 Dumville, 'Ireland and north Britain', p. 196. See A. Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba: Scotland, 789–1070* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp 113–14. 14 *AI*, s.a. 795; *AU*, s.a. 802, 806, 825; *The Chronicle of Ireland*, ed. and trans. T. Charles-Edwards, 2 vols (Liverpool, 2006), i, pp 257, 263, 267, 283. 15 C. Downham, *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 13; *Chronicle of Ireland*, i, pp 294–9. The first attested camp may have been established at Inber Dea (Arklow) in 836. Vikings were based on Lough Neagh in 839, 840 and 841. Camps were established at Dublin and Linn Duachail in 841. 16 *AU*, s.a. 839. 17 *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. F. Grat et al. (Paris, 1964), s.a. 847; *The Annals of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. J.L. Nelson (Manchester, 1991), p. 65. 18 A. Woolf, 'The age of sea-

pre-existing units, Cenél Comgaill and Cenél Loairn, which favours a theory of continuity in some regions. The names of the other major groups, Cenél nÓengusso and Cenél nGabráin, were lost, which may indicate radical change.¹⁹

Place-names provide some clues to cultural divisions within Dál Riata after Viking settlement. Andrew Jennings and Arne Kruse have identified two zones of Viking settlement, which have been dubbed an inner zone and an outer zone.²⁰ In the outer zone lie Islay, Coll, Tiree and the Outer Hebrides, western Mull and Skye. In this outer zone there is a lack of evidence for pre-Viking-Age names, indicating that Viking settlers made little effort to integrate culturally with the pre-existing population. Old Scandinavian habitative names in the outer zone indicate that Scandinavian speech persisted over several generations.²¹ The inner zone comprises mainland Dál Riata, Arran, Bute and eastern Mull. In these areas Scandinavian place-names are topographical, but not habitative. Jennings and Kruse have argued that Gaelic society survived in these areas and that the Vikings who settled here soon adopted Gaelic speech. Their argument is that these areas of integration were occupied by Gallgóidil, whose name implies a people who spoke Gaelic but who had Scandinavian aspects to their culture.²² The position of Jennings and Kruse finds some support in historical references to the activities of Gallgóidil in Bute (discussed further below).

One of the most heavily scandinavianized areas that can clearly be identified within the former territories of Dál Riata was Islay. The island bears a pre-Viking name (Gaelic Íle) recorded in Adomnán's *Vita sancti Columbae*.²³ There is, however, little evidence that other place-names on the island ante-date the Viking Age. Alan Macniven has made the case that the extant Gaelic names on Islay were coined after the Viking era and that many Gaelic names were coined during processes of land reorganization since the sixteenth century.²⁴ Macniven has argued that the pre-Viking-Age Gaelic names of Islay were swept away in a phase of settlement by Scandinavian-speakers.²⁵ The evidence points to an Old Scandinavian speech community becoming dominant in the island over many generations. For example, a place-name element that was presumed to be productive after the first generation of Viking settlement is *-bólstaðr*, indicating the subdivision of lands.²⁶ The strategic importance of Islay may have encouraged a strong assertion of Scandinavian language and place-names to

kings, 900–1300' in D. Omand (ed.), *The Argyll book* (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 94. ¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ A. Jennings and A. Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 5 (2009), 135; W. Nicolaisen, *Scottish place-names* (London, 1976), pp 87–96.

²¹ Jennings and Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', 138–9. ²² Ibid., 141–4.

²³ *Adomnán, Life of Columba*, ii, § 23. ²⁴ Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, p. 297; Jennings and Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', 138, citing Macniven's unpublished doctoral thesis; A. Macniven, 'Modelling Viking migration to the Inner Hebrides', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, 4 (2013), 7. ²⁵ A. Macniven, 'What's in a name? The Norse invasion of Islay?', unpublished lecture presented at the Scottish Society for Northern Studies conference, Islay,

13 Apr. 2012. ²⁶ Jennings and Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', 138.

secure its possession by the Viking overlords. In this light it is relevant to note Woolf's suggestion that the west of Islay became a political base for Viking power, from which raids were launched against Ireland.²⁷ The lack of evidence for pre-Viking-Age place-names in Islay, Coll and Tiree may suggest that Gaelic speakers on these islands either left, lost status, or quickly adopted Scandinavian speech.²⁸

VIKING GRAVES

Archaeology also provides an insight into the strong Scandinavian character of the 'outer zone' of the former lands of Dál Riata in the Viking Age. Islay and its northern and western neighbours, Colonsay, Oronsay, Tiree and Eigg, are rich in Viking burials.²⁹ There are fewer Scandinavian graves to the east. One has been discovered on Mull and a furnished boat burial has recently been excavated on the Ardnamurchan peninsula.³⁰ To the south Jura, Kintyre and Bute have no known Viking graves. Arran has one or possibly two furnished burials. Disparities in wealth, such as the relative poverty of Jura, may explain some differences in distribution. The density of burials may also hint at distinctions between areas of dominant Scandinavian culture and areas of mixed Scandinavian and Gaelic culture.³¹ It would be unwise to correlate cultural evidence with linguistic evidence too closely owing to the chance nature of archaeological discoveries and the fact that burials represent a moment of cultural expression whereas place-names reflect long-term linguistic interactions.

The heathen burials of what we might call the outer zone of Dál Riata demonstrate a perceived need to display Scandinavian religious identity in ostentatious burial rituals. It is possible that the burials visually encoded the landscape with Scandinavian cultural references, through the use of grave-markers and mounds that would remain after the funeral festivities were forgotten. The heathen burials of Islay, Colonsay, Oronsay and Tiree tend to focus on the western coasts of the islands. This corresponds to the more fertile areas, which were more densely settled. The burials look out to the Scandinavian cultural world of the Hebridean seaways. The heathen burials sited along maritime routeways and at entry points to the islands may have consciously displayed their place in a Scandinavian cultural world.³²

27 Woolf, 'Age of sea-kings', pp 94–5. 28 Jennings and Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', 134; A. Johnston, 'Norse settlement patterns in Coll and Tiree' in B.E. Crawford (ed.), *Scandinavian settlement in northern Britain* (Leicester, 1995), p. 25. 29 J. Graham-Campbell and C. Batey, *Vikings in Scotland, an archaeological survey* (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 89. 30 O. Harris et al., 'A Viking at rest: new discoveries at Ardnamurchan', *Medieval Archaeology*, 56 (2012), 333–9. See also the reported provenance of rivets from Gordon Bay, Argyll, in A. Redmond, *Viking burial in the north of England, a study of contact, interaction and reaction* (Oxford, 2007), p. 74. 31 Woolf, 'Age of sea-kings', pp 94–5. 32 See S. Harrison,

A further striking feature of the outer zone graves is the high proportion of female incumbents gendered by assemblage. On Islay four female graves have been identified. There are two female graves from Oronsay, one each from Colonsay, Tiree and Mull, and one possible female grave from each of Arran and Eigg. It is hard to determine the number of graves recovered since numerous finds precede the twentieth century. Vague accounts are given of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discoveries. Nevertheless there is a rough 1:1 gender ratio of burials in these islands, which is similar to that of Scotland as a whole. Farther south the proportion of females is lower.³³ In some districts of Norway during the Viking Age the ratios of male to female furnished graves are as contrasting as 10:1, although the ratios appear to vary over time as well as space.³⁴ It is necessary to keep in mind that grave-assemblages are gendered rather than sexed; they provide a less reliable guide to biological sex than do osteological studies. The former technique has usually been prioritized because of its convenience.³⁵ Assemblages provide a display of identity (including ethnicity and gender) that reflects what people in the past considered to be important.

The evidence from the Scottish islands may indicate that female Scandinavian culture was more highly prized on the Isles than it was in Scandinavia. To draw on modern parallels, female display of 'homeland' culture in a diasporic environment can be seen to symbolize cultural integrity and continuity, and is therefore regarded as important.³⁶ This may occur in societies where the maintenance of a separate identity from indigenous or neighbouring peoples is considered a priority. The female Viking burials may show the economic and social prominence of women and/or the islanders' strong adherence to Scandinavian identity (whether inherited or adopted).³⁷ Around the Insular Viking zone, the archaeological evidence points to varied levels of assimilation

'Separated from the foaming maelstrom: landscapes of Insular "Viking" burial', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 14 (2008), 173–82; R. Ó Floinn, 'The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 132–7. 33 Redmond, *Viking burial*, pp xiv–xxv. 34 N. Wicker, 'Selective female infanticide as partial explanation for the dearth of women in Viking-Age Scandinavia' in G. Halsall (ed.), *Violence and society in the medieval west* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 211; L.H. Dommasnes, 'Late Iron Age in western Norway: female roles and ranks as deduced from an analysis of burial customs', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 15 (1982), 82. See B. Solberg, 'Social status in the Merovingian and Viking periods in Norway from archaeological and historical sources', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 18 (1985), 61–76. 35 S. McLeod, 'Warriors and women: the sex ratio of Norse migrants to eastern England up to 900AD', *Early Medieval Europe*, 19 (2011), 332–53; F. Stylegar, 'Hvorfor er det færre kvinne- enn mannsgrover fra vikingtiden i Norge?', *Primitive Tider*, 12 (2010), 71–9; L. Mortensen, 'The "marauding pagan warrior" woman' in K.A. Pyburn (ed.), *Ungendering civilization* (London, 2004), pp 94–116; A. Stalsberg, 'Visible women made invisible: interpreting Varangian women in old Russia' in B. Arnold and N. Wicker (eds), *Gender and the archaeology of death* (Lanham, MD, 2001), p. 75. 36 R. Palriwali and P. Uberoi, 'Exploring the links: gender issues in marriage and migration' in R. Palriwali and P. Uberoi (eds), *Marriage, migration and gender* (New Delhi, 2008), pp 24, 29–32, 43. 37 Stalsberg,

between Gaelic and Scandinavian culture from region to region.³⁸ The evidence from Islay and its northern and westerly neighbours, and perhaps Arran, indicates a marked desire among island elites at the moment of burial to maintain a sense of Scandinavian heritage. This display of Scandinavian identity may have been in contrast to more gaelicized communities in the inner zone of former Dál Riata.

THE ORIGINS OF THE KINGDOM OF THE ISLES

The island territories of Dál Riata were incorporated over time into the kingdom of the Isles. When this development took place is unclear and the origins of the polity are shrouded in Gaelic and Scandinavian legends. In Gaelic pseudo-history the foundation of the kingdom is linked with Cináed mac Ailpín (better known as Kenneth McAlpin).³⁹ Under the year 835 (=836), the Annals of the Four Masters report that ‘Guðrøðr son of Fergus, chief of Airgialla, went to Alba, to strengthen Dál Riata, at the request of Cináed son of Alpin’. Some time later, the entry for 851 (=853) states that ‘Guðrøðr son of Fergus, chief of Innsi Gall, died’.⁴⁰ But Woolf has convincingly shown that these entries cannot be taken at face value and that they represent a confection of the fourteenth century or later.⁴¹

In Icelandic sagas, the legendary origin of the kingdom of the Isles is credited to Haraldr *hárfaðri* (Harald Finehair). According to *Landnámabók* and *Eyrbyggja saga* the king sent Ketill *flatnefr* to deal with Viking settlers in the Hebrides who were raiding Norway.⁴² Ketill’s western expedition was so successful that he set himself up as leader in the Hebrides and ceased to recognize Harald’s authority. *Laxdæla saga* gives a different account, claiming that Ketill travelled to Scotland to flee Harald’s tyranny.⁴³ Ketill is said to have made peace with leaders around the Irish Sea and married his daughter Auðr to a Viking leader in Ireland called

‘Visible women’, pp 65–79. For the adoption of Scandinavian identity by non-Scandinavians, see J. Montgomery et al., ‘Sr isotope evidence for population movement within the Hebridean Norse community of NW Scotland’, *Journal of the Geological Society*, 160 (2003), 649–53. I am grateful to Shane McLeod for this reference. ³⁸ The term ‘Insular Viking zone’ is adopted from C. Etchingham, ‘North Wales, Ireland and the isles: the Insular Viking zone’, *Peritia*, 15 (2001), 145–87. ³⁹ *AFM*, s.a. 835: ‘Gofraid mac Fergus, toiseach Oirgiall, do imitct go hAlbain do nirtugad Dhail Riada, tre forcongrad Chionate mic Ailpín’; 851: ‘Gofraid mac Feargusa, toisich Innsi Gall, décc’. ⁴⁰ Note that ‘chief’, *toisech* in that text is conventionally used instead of ‘king’, *rí*. ⁴¹ A. Woolf, ‘The origins and ancestry of Somerled: Gofraid mac Fergus and “The Annals of the Four Masters”’, *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 15 (2005), 12–15. ⁴² In *Landnámabók*, Haraldr is credited with having led an expedition to the Hebrides. *Orkneyinga saga* and *Heimskringla* also present Haraldr raiding in the west. For commentary on the historicity of these narratives, see P. Sawyer, ‘Harold Fairhair and the British Isles’ in R. Boyer (ed.), *Les vikings et leur civilisation; problèmes actuelles* (Paris, 1976), pp 105–9. ⁴³ K. Kunz, ‘The saga of the people of Laxardal’ in K.C. Attwood et al.

Óláfr *inn hvíti*. Scholarly opinions are divided on whether this account should be accepted. Woolf has argued that the story was developed to legitimize Norwegian claims of sovereignty in the Hebrides.⁴⁴ Jennings and Kruse have accepted the saga accounts, while commenting that the transmission of Ketill's account may be 'muddled and mistaken in parts' and that 'details can be mixed up and forgotten'.⁴⁵ Ketill may have been an historical figure who was active in north Britain, but the inconsistencies in the saga accounts alone hint at the difficulties of distinguishing fact from fiction. Ketill's activities may have been invented to flatter the significant Icelandic families who claimed descent from him. Evidence of a kingdom of the Isles does not emerge in contemporary sources until the tenth century. Although there are plenty of indicators of Viking activity in the region in the ninth century, it was a politically fragmented landscape.

Contemporary sources record a struggle for mastery in north Britain between the descendants of Cináed mac Ailpín and Vikings based in Dublin during the late 860s and 870s. This would have impacted on the Isles as a stopping-off point for ships sailing north from the Irish Sea. It was perhaps with an eye to obstructing Viking ambitions that a marriage alliance was struck between Máel Múire, daughter of Cináed mac Ailpín, and the Northern Uí Néill over-king Áed Findliath.⁴⁶ In 866 Áed sacked Viking settlements along the northern Irish coasts, which would have weakened their control over the northern seaways.⁴⁷ Following their expulsion from Dublin in 902 the southern Hebrides may have served as a base for Viking leaders of Dublin.⁴⁸ In 904 two battles were fought in Alba by grandsons of Ívarr of Dublin.⁴⁹ In the same year Vikings plundered Ailech, seat of the Northern Uí Néill kings on the Inishowen peninsula, Co. Donegal.⁵⁰ Viking activity around the north-eastern coast of Ireland is also witnessed in the location of silver hoards in Cos Antrim, Down and Londonderry, all datable around 910.⁵¹ Sea battles took place in 913 and 914 between Ulaid and Vikings, and between rival Viking groups.⁵² These battles indicate rivalries at sea prior to the recapture of Dublin by the dynasty of Ívarr.

The political importance of the Hebrides and the Isle of Man rose considerably in the mid tenth-century and this time frame may reflect the true origins of the kingdom of the Isles. From the 960s leaders based in Man and the Isles were flexing their muscles in Irish Sea politics, raiding Ireland and Wales.⁵³

(trans.), *The sagas of the Icelanders* (London, 1997), pp 276–8, §§ 1–4. ⁴⁴ Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, pp 295–6. ⁴⁵ Jennings and Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', 127–8. ⁴⁶ *AU*, s.a. 913. ⁴⁷ *AFM*, s.a. 864; *AU*, s.a. 866. ⁴⁸ *AFM*, s.a. 897; *AU*, s.a. 902; *CS*, s.a. 902. ⁴⁹ *CS*, s.a. 904; *AU*, s.a. 904. ⁵⁰ Downham, *Viking kings*, p. 30. ⁵¹ M. Blackburn et al., 'Checklist of coin hoards from the British Isles, c.450–1180', nos 90, 91, 93a at www-cm.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/projects/hoards/index.list.html (accessed 10 Aug. 2012); J. Sheehan, 'Early Viking-Age silver hoards from Ireland and their Scandinavian elements' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, p. 198. ⁵² *AU*, s.a. 913, 914. ⁵³ Etchingham, 'North Wales', 167–70.

This was followed in the 970s and 980s by the reigns of Maccus and Guðrøðr Haraldsson, who are accorded the title 'king of the Isles' in Insular sources. These kings played an active role in English, Irish and Welsh affairs.⁵⁴ The wealth of the kingdom of the Isles in this period is witnessed in silver hoards.⁵⁵

After Guðrøðr's death in 989, the independence of the Isles was compromised by the competing interests of three foreign kings – Brian Bórama of Ireland, Sveinn Haraldsson of Denmark and Æthelred of England.⁵⁶ The Isle of Man was attacked by Sveinn in 995 and by Æthelred in 1000.⁵⁷ Five years later, Rögnvaldr son of Guðrøðr Haraldsson, king of the Isles, died in Munster.⁵⁸ If this event hints at alliance with King Brian, the amity was soon dissolved. The Islesmen sent a contingent to oppose Brian at the Battle of Clontarf, fought on Good Friday 1014.⁵⁹ The failure of the Vikings of Dublin and the Isles to secure victory on this occasion further weakened their political status. It was in the early eleventh century, when the power of kings of Dublin and the Isles was relatively weak, that evidence emerges of a kingdom of Gallgoídil in western Scotland.

THE ORIGINS OF THE GALLGOÍDIL

Groups bearing the name Gallgoídil are recorded in both medieval Ireland and Britain. Scholars have debated whether they are the same people or different in each island. Their presence in Ireland is recorded only for a short time during the 850s, yet their persistence in Scotland eventually gave rise to the modern regional name Galloway.⁶⁰ Among the scholars who have considered that the Gallgoídil were a single group, the prevailing argument has been that the Gallgoídil in Ireland were temporary visitors from north Britain. A second argument is that Gallgoídil were plural groups, who arose here and there across Gaeldom.⁶¹

In favour of the argument for polygenesis is early evidence of cultural borrowing and integration across ethnic boundaries in Ireland, which makes the development of a bicultural group within Ireland plausible. For example, in 842 Vikings and Irish joined together to attack the church of Linn Duachaill (Annagassan, Co. Louth), and in 847 an Irish chronicler castigated the Irish population groups of Luigne and Gailenga for behaving 'in the manner of heathens'.⁶²

⁵⁴ Downham, *Viking kings*, pp 185–96. ⁵⁵ Blackburn et al., 'Checklist of coin hoards', nos 138a, 143, 147a, 155, 159, 165, 167a, and nos 162, 168, 171. A hoard at Port Glasgow, no. 169, may also be linked with this group. ⁵⁶ *AFM*, s.a. 988; *AU*, s.a. 989; *CS*, s.a. 987. ⁵⁷ Downham, *Viking kings*, p. 197. ⁵⁸ *AU*, s.a. 1005; *CS*, s.a. 1003. ⁵⁹ Downham, *Viking kings*, pp 197–8. ⁶⁰ W.J. Watson, *The history of the Celtic place-names of Scotland* (London, 1926), pp 172–4; T. Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', *Journal of Scottish Name Studies*, 2 (2008), 20. ⁶¹ D.N. Dumville, *The churches of north Britain in the first Viking Age* (Whithorn, 1997), pp 27–8; J.I. Young, 'A note on the Norse occupation of Ireland', *History*, ns, 35 (1950), 24. ⁶² *AU*, s.a. 842, 847; *CS*, s.a. 847: *more gentiliū*.

The first instance of Gallgoídil in Ireland was made with reference to the year 856, for which the Chronicle of Ireland records a great war between the heathens (that is, Vikings) on one side, and Máel Sechnaill, over-king of the Southern Uí Néill, and Gallgoídil on the other. In the same year, the Northern Uí Néill over-king Áed Findliath won a great victory over Gallgoídil in Glenelly, Co. Tyrone.⁶³ In 857 Gallgoídil under the leadership of Caittil *finn* fought and lost in Munster against the Vikings of Dublin, led by Ívarr and Óláfr.⁶⁴ This war continued in the following year when the Gallgoídil were annihilated with their allies from Cenél Fiachach at Arra (Co. Tipperary) by Ívarr of Dublin and his Irish ally Cerball of Osraige. In this event 6,400 men are alleged to have fallen.⁶⁵ While this figure may not be accurate, it must indicate that many men died. The defeat dealt a significant blow to the fortunes of Gallgoídil in Ireland, from which they never recovered. From this time either the identity of Gallgoídil merged with other Viking groups in Ireland, or they were expelled from the island.⁶⁶

The Irish chronicles provide a few hints as to the character of the Gallgoídil in the ninth century. It is intriguing that in 858 they are called the Gallgoídil of Leth Cuinn, that is to say, the northern half of Ireland. The need to specify where they are from could suggest that there were indeed plural groups of Gallgoídil at different territorial locations. They are also linked here with Ireland and the suzerainty of Máel Sechnaill, rather than being identified as travellers from Scotland. Máel Sechnaill seems to have deployed his Gallgoídil allies to campaign on his behalf in Munster. They also fought against his rival Áed in the lands of the Northern Uí Néill. The defeat of the Gallgoídil in Co. Tyrone in 857 could imply their connection with the coasts of Leth Cuinn. It may be possible to reconcile the different arguments of Scottish or Irish origins for the Gallgoídil if we put aside perspectives based on modern national boundaries. They may have been a single group who occupied an area straddling the northern shores of Ireland and the western seaboard and islands of northern Britain (where they are later recorded). As with the example of early medieval Dál Riata, the Gallgoídil may have treated the sea as a routeway rather than a frontier. Between the arguments of Scottish monogenesis or Gaelic polygenesis for the Gallgoídil, there is space to suggest that they were a single 'discrete and coherent' group whose boundaries crossed the sea.⁶⁷

The earliest witness to identify the Gallgoídil as holding territory in north Britain may be the Martyrology of Tallaght. The record of St Bláán's feast day (10 August) locates Kingarth on Bute in the territory of Gallgoídil.⁶⁸ Thomas Clancy has argued that this record dates from the early tenth century. A broader

⁶³ *AFM*, s.a. 854; *AU*, s.a. 856; *CS*, s.a. 855. ⁶⁴ *AU*, s.a. 857; *CS*, s.a. 856. ⁶⁵ *AFM*, s.a. 856; *CS*, s.a. 857. ⁶⁶ The Gallgoídil are not mentioned as being active in Ireland again until the twelfth century when their fleet was recruited by Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn, of the Northern Uí Néill, to fight against the forces of Connacht (*AFM*, s.a. 1154). ⁶⁷ Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 24. ⁶⁸ *The Martyrology of Tallaght*, ed. R.I. Best and H.J.

date range is nonetheless possible, as the entry on St Bláán may be a later addition to the text.⁶⁹ The earliest manuscript of the martyrology dates from the second half of the twelfth century. If the Gallgoidil were being referred to in Bute within living memory of the recorded activity of Gallgoidil in Ireland, this raises the chances that Irish authors had the same group in mind. Given the limitations of the evidence, however, this argument is inconclusive. The onomastic evidence for Viking activity on Bute has recently been explored by Gilbert Markús and the archaeological data have been summarized usefully by Barbara Crawford.⁷⁰ Their conclusions support the theory that a gaelicized Viking community dwelt on the island in the late ninth and tenth centuries.

One idea put forward repeatedly by Jennings and Kruse was that Caittil *finn*, who is identified as the leader of Gallgoidil in Ireland in 857, is the same individual as Ketill *flatnefr* recorded in much later Icelandic sagas. They suggest from their interpretation of the saga material that Ketill was the conqueror of Dál Riata.⁷¹ This explanation of the evidence is difficult to accept. Their case builds on the work of earlier scholars, but the matter has long been contentious.⁷² There is no evidence for unified leadership across the former lands of Dál Riata at this stage and there is nothing in the sources that explicitly connects the leader of the Gallgoidil with the hero of Icelandic saga.

In 1034 the death of Suibne son of Cináed, king of the Gallgoidil, is recorded in the Annals of Tigernach and the Annals of Ulster.⁷³ This record may reflect the growing power of Gallgoidil in Britain; the death of their king was significant enough to excite the interests of Irish chroniclers. Furthermore Gallgoidil gain mention in the saga-chronicle embedded in section four of the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland, which is thought to have been composed during the reign of Donnchad of Osraige (1003–39).⁷⁴ The political development of the kingdom of Gallgoidil may have caused unease across the Irish Sea and that may have influenced contemporary historical writing. The text embedded in the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland celebrates the deeds of Cerball mac Dúnlainge (842–88), the ancestor of Donnchad of Osraige. I have suggested elsewhere that the particular portrayal of different ninth-century Viking groups (Finngaill and

Lawlor (London, 1931), p. 62. ⁶⁹ As David Dumville has noted in conversation, the appearance of St Bláán before Maelruain of Tallaght on 10 Aug. might arouse suspicion. If the text was drafted at Tallaght, one might expect Maelruain to be listed first. St Bláán's entry could therefore have been added at the start of the entry for 10 Aug. ⁷⁰ G. Markús, 'From Goill to Gall-Ghàidheil: Scandinavian settlement in Bute' in A. Ritchie (ed.), *Historic Bute: land and people* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp 1–16; B. Crawford, 'The Norse in the west with particular reference to Bute' in Ritchie (ed.), *Historic Bute*, pp 36–9. See also now the record of a Viking silver ingot, 'Treasure trove in Scotland annual report 2013/14', p. 24 (03/13), available online at www.qtr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/files/ANNUAL%20TT%20REPORT%20%2013%20to%2014.pdf (accessed 26 Nov. 2014). ⁷¹ Jennings and Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', 126–33. ⁷² Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, pp 295–7; Downham, *Viking kings*, p. 18, n. 44. ⁷³ *AT*, p. 266; *AU*, s.a. 1034. ⁷⁴ *FA*, p. xxvi.

Dubgaill) in this text was affected by an eleventh-century political agenda.⁷⁵ It may be relevant to note that the Gallgoídil are portrayed there as the most heinous group of Vikings. Could fear and loathing of the growing power of the Gallgoídil in the Irish Sea region in the eleventh century have influenced this portrayal?⁷⁶ We may trace in the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland an early example of derogatory portrayals of Gallgoídil or Galwegians that would flourish in the twelfth century.⁷⁷

As has been demonstrated by Thomas Clancy, the eleventh-century polity of Gallgoídil was not coextensive with the modern region, Galloway, which bears their name. In the twelfth-century commentary on the Martyrology of Óengus, Ailsa Craig was said to be where the queen of Gallgoídil grazed her sheep.⁷⁸ A discussion on the martyrdom of Donnán of Eigg in the later twelfth-century Book of Leinster identifies Ailsa as a rock between Gallgoídil and Kintyre.⁷⁹ This could indicate some shrinkage during the twelfth century in the northern reaches of the kingdom.

The Rhinns of Galloway are recorded as a separate entity, and apparently one distinct from Gallgoídil, in the later eleventh century. In 1064 a former king of Dublin and the Isles, Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson, was identified as king of the Rhinns in the chronicle of Marianus Scotus (written in the 1070s and 1080s).⁸⁰ The death of a later king of the Rhinns, called Mac Congail, is reported in the Annals of Inisfallen under the year 1094.⁸¹ The name Rhinns now refers to the hammer-shaped peninsula at the western end of Galloway. In the twelfth-century commentary on *Félire Óengusso*, however, Whithorn in the Machars peninsula is identified within the Rhinns.⁸² The eleventh-century polity of the Rhinns may therefore have comprised a larger area than the modern-day peninsula.

The twelfth-century *Vita Griffini filii Conani* states that Óláfr Sigtryggsson (d. 1034) was king of Dublin, Man, Galloway, Anglesey, Gwynedd and the territory of *Arennae* (implying therefore that the latter was separate from Galloway). The later Welsh version of the text records this last-mentioned place as *Renneu*. This has been interpreted as the Rhinns by Clancy.⁸³ Paul Russell, however, has noted that the original Latin spelling, which favours identification with the Isle of Arran, holds greater authority on text-historical grounds.⁸⁴ The

75 C. Downham, 'The good, the bad and the ugly: portrayals of Vikings in "The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland"', *Medieval Chronicle*, 3 (2005), 28–40. 76 Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 25, citing Jennings' unpublished doctoral thesis. 77 *Walter Daniel, Life of Ailred of Rievaulx*, ed. and trans. F.M. Powicke (Edinburgh, 1950), pp 45–6, 74. 78 *The Martyrology of Óengus the Culdee*, ed. and trans. W. Stokes (London, 1905), pp 116–17; P. Ó Riain, 'The Martyrology of Óengus: the transmission of the text', *Studia Hibernica*, 31 (2000–1), 231–2, 241. 79 Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 33–4; *The Book of Leinster, formerly Leabar na Núachongbála*, ed. R.I. Best et al., 6 vols (Dublin, 1954–83), vi, p. 1688. 80 F.J. Byrne, 'Na Renna', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 267. 81 *AI*, s.a. 1094. 82 F. Edmonds, *Whithorn's renown in the early medieval period: Whithorn, Futerna and magnum monasterium* (Whithorn, 2009), pp 23–4. 83 Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 29. 84 *Vita Griffini filii Conani*:

list of Óláfr's possessions in *Vita Griffini* may be exaggerated. It includes places that Óláfr had ruled only temporarily or to which he merely held a claim. The assertion that Óláfr ruled Galloway conflicts with the evidence of Suibne's power there, given that the men were contemporaries. Both died in 1034. If the sources can (or should) be reconciled, one might argue that Suibne mac Cináeda took some or all of Galloway from Óláfr. It may have been at this point that the kingdom of the Rhinns was separated from the kingdom of Gallgoídil and was held by kings of the Isles until the death of Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson. The obit of Mac Congail provides a *terminus post quem* for the incorporation (or reincorporation) of the Rhinns into Galloway.

Little is known about the political history of Galloway prior to the accession of Fergus to rule there. This leader is first mentioned in the 1130s, at a time when the lordship was being drawn under the increasing influence of Scottish kings. Fergus' lands did not include Bute or Ailsa Craig. His focus of power seems to have lain in the lower Dee valley, centred on Kirkcudbright.⁸⁵ Carrick (southern Ayrshire) was detached from Galloway in the late twelfth century, as rival lines emerged from the offspring of Fergus. Thus Galloway's northern territory, looking out over the Firth of Clyde, was removed. Nevertheless, Fergus' Galloway included the Rhinns and there is evidence that Galloway also extended its eastern boundary from the River Urr to the River Nith during the twelfth century.⁸⁶ As Clancy has convincingly demonstrated, there was a significant change in the territory of Gallgoídil over time.⁸⁷ Galloway in the late twelfth century became a fairly compact territorial unit that extended across the north Solway coast. The earlier territory of Gallgoídil had a maritime orientation that included strategic coastal areas around the Firth of Clyde.

VIKING SETTLEMENT FROM THE FIRTH OF CLYDE TO GALLOWAY

The settlement of mixed Gaelic and Scandinavian groups along the southern coasts of what is now Galloway may have proceeded from the lands of Gallgoídil around the Firth of Clyde, in the inner zone of Viking settlement discussed by Jennings and Kruse. The name Galloway would naturally have extended to the newly founded settlements. This posited southern expansion of Gallgoídil territory in Britain followed their failure to maintain a foothold in Ireland.

Gallgoídil had faced significant opposition from Vikings based in Dublin during the 850s. These rivalries may have continued after they had been driven from Ireland. In 870 two Viking leaders from Dublin, Óláfr and Ívarr,

the medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan, ed. P. Russell (Cardiff, 2005), pp 54–5, 129, § 4.
 85 R. Oram, *The lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 56. 86 R. Oram, 'Fergus, Galloway and the Scots' in R. Oram and G. Stell (eds), *Galloway: land and lordship* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 125. 87 Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 37–8.

successfully besieged Dumbarton Rock. The fall of this citadel indicates that Ívarr and his associates had achieved a degree of control over the Clyde estuary that they attempted to maintain in 875/6 when Ívarr's brother Hálfdanr attacked Strathclyde. The siege of Dumbarton has been tentatively associated with a ninth-century enclosure containing furnished and unaccompanied burials at Midross near the western shores of Loch Lomond (north of the River Clyde).⁸⁸ These burials may be linked with an earlier discovery of weapons in a prehistoric mound at Boiden indicative of a Viking warrior burial.⁸⁹ It has been tempting for scholars to link the graves at Midross with the Viking attack on Dumbarton, since this is one of the few known historical events of the region. Nevertheless the graves may reflect a mixed cultural settlement of Gallgoídil or Gall-Bretnach separate from the violent assault on Dumbarton.⁹⁰

As a consequence of the devastating impact of the Viking attack on Dumbarton, the seat of power in Strathclyde appears to have shifted 24km inland to Govan. The intervention of Vikings from Dublin in the Clyde estuary may have prompted leaders of Gallgoídil to extend their influence elsewhere. South-west of the Clyde (in modern Ayrshire) was a region that fluctuated between Brittonic and Northumbrian control prior to the Viking Age. It has been suggested that Gaelic and Scandinavian names were brought to the region by Gallgoídil. The evidence of place-names and saints' cults may point specifically to settlement from Arran and Kintyre.⁹¹

Conventionally, the Gaelic-Scandinavian colonization along the north Solway coast is dated to the early tenth century. There is, however, evidence of ninth-century Viking activity in the area. This includes the hoard deposited at Talnotrie in Kirkcudbright around 875, whose contents include two fragments of Kufic coins and a fragment of a Frankish denier that had probably passed through Viking hands.⁹² A cremation burial of uncertain date, including part of a silver arm-ring and an amber bead, was discovered in Blackerne cairn in Crossmichael parish in the eighteenth century.⁹³ Two warrior burials of ninth- or tenth-century

88 G. MacGregor, 'Changing people, changing landscapes: excavation at the Carrick, Midross, Loch Lomond', *Historic Argyll* (2009), 11–12. Full publication of the site is pending.

89 Redmond, *Viking burials*, p. 74. See also S. Macleod, 'The *dubh gall* in southern Scotland: the politics of Northumbria, Dublin and the community of St Cuthbert in the Viking Age, c.870–950', *Limina*, forthcoming.

90 Tim Clarkson has recently blogged about the Gall-Bretnach at <http://senchus.wordpress.com/tag/vikings/> (accessed 10 Aug. 2012). 91 S. Taylor, 'Ayrshire place-names: a rich seam still to mine', *Ayrshire Notes*, 38 (2009), 8–11; Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 37. Could the passage of Gallgoídil through this former Brittonic-speaking region explain the shift in pronunciation of the name Gallgoídil to Galloway? See Watson, *History of the Celtic place-names*, p. 174. 92 Downham, *Viking kings*, pp 172–3. 93 Graham-Campbell and Batey, *Vikings in Scotland*, p. 108; G. Zabiński, 'Viking-Age swords from Scotland', *Acta Militaria Mediaevalia*, 3 (2007), 77. There is insufficient evidence to credit the unusual burial of a bundle of bones overlain with cremated human remains at Whithorn to the Vikings, although this remains a possibility. These burials may be of ninth-century date (P. Hill et al., *Whithorn and St Ninian: the excavation of a monastic town*,

date have also been recovered: one from St Cuthbert's churchyard at Kirkcudbright, including a sword, ring-pin and bead; and another from Carronbridge with a sword, penannular brooch and sickle. The brooch recovered from the Carronbridge burial is of northern British style.⁹⁴ It may be that elite groups of Gallgoidil from the Firth of Clyde or Ayrshire spearheaded the conquest of territories north of the Solway and established the name Galloway prior to the arrival of contingents from Dublin.⁹⁵

The strategic location of Galloway in the Viking Age brought it into contact with a wider world of traders and settlers from northern England and from Dublin. The onomastic evidence from Galloway presents the region as a cultural crossroads. The appearance of *airigh* names in Galloway may hint at the influence of Gallgoidil from the Firth of Clyde.⁹⁶ While maritime routes were of key significance for the political and economic fortunes of Galloway, the region was also penetrable by land from the Firth of Clyde using the route of the Rivers Clyde and Nith. The evidence of place-names indicates that there was no mass Viking immigration north of the Solway, but a Gaelic-Scandinavian elite settled there and made its mark.⁹⁷

The economic and political significance of the Galloway region by the tenth century is suggested by the magnificent silver hoard that has recently been discovered in western Dumfriesshire. As this essay goes to press, news of the finds is being released.⁹⁸ A full overview is impossible to obtain while conservation work is ongoing. Even so, the hoard consists of over 100 items, including many Hiberno-Scandinavian silver armbands and ingots as well as Frankish and Insular components. Links between Galloway and Dublin are suggested by the building styles and material culture of the trading settlement

1984–91 (Stroud, 1997), pp 559–60). ⁹⁴ O. Owen and R. Welander, 'A traveller's end?: an associated group of early historical artefacts from Carronbridge, Dumfries and Galloway', *PSAS*, 125 (1995), 766. It seems more likely that this burial represents a settler rather than a visitor to the region. ⁹⁵ Although it is clear that the expulsion from Dublin in 902 did make an impact on Viking settlements in Britain, I am no longer satisfied that it explains the broader phenomenon of Viking settlement in north-west England and Galloway. ⁹⁶ A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: the history and archaeology of two related Viking kingdoms*, 2 vols (Dublin and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1975–9), i, p. 80. See G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles and Normandy' in J. Adams and K. Holman (eds), *Scandinavia and Europe, 800–1350: contact, conflict and coexistence* (Turnhout, 2004), p. 139; A. Livingston, 'Airigh farm names in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright', p. 7, at http://independent.academia.edu/AlistairLivingston/Papers/378422/Airigh_as_place_name_element_in_farm_names_Kirkcudbrightshire (accessed 10 Aug. 2012). ⁹⁷ R.D. Oram, 'Scandinavian settlement in south-west Scotland with a special study of Bysbie' in Crawford (ed.), *Scandinavian settlement in northern Britain*, pp 133–5. ⁹⁸ M. Scougall, 'Metal detector enthusiast on a £1 million hot streak', *Sunday Post*, 12 Oct. 2014, accessed online at www.sundaypost.com/news-views/scotland/metal-detector-enthusiast-on-a-1-million-hot-streak-1.623567 (accessed 26 Nov. 2014). See TT36/14 three pieces of Viking silver have also been recovered from Glenlochar, at www.treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/Documents/New_cases/New_cases_July_2014.pdf (accessed 26 Nov. 2014).

of Whithorn in the eleventh century.⁹⁹ This complements the historical evidence for the ambitions of kings of Dublin in the region.¹⁰⁰

Clancy has suggested that, in the eleventh century, the term Gallgòidil did not extend to the territory now called Galloway.¹⁰¹ I would be inclined, however, to argue that modern Galloway was settled by Gallgòidil from the north before the eleventh century and that their name travelled with them to the new area. The Rhinns, which we find referred to separately, may have been a politically detachable part of this hypothetical greater Galloway extending north and east from the Solway Firth towards the Firth of Clyde. The existence of a greater Galloway is hinted at in twelfth-century charters, as has been demonstrated by Geoffrey Barrow: points stretching from Kyle to Annandale are identified within the lands of Galloway. It would nevertheless be unwise to project this twelfth-century terminology back to the political situation of the eleventh century with any precision.¹⁰² Rather than posit complete dislocation in the usage of the territorial name, it is possible to suggest that the expansion and contraction of Gallgòidil over time may have left the final result (modern Galloway) looking very different from its original territories.

CONCLUSION

The arguments presented above are hypothetical. They represent the exploration of possible scenarios in an area where the spread of historical data is limited and eludes conclusive interpretation. It is perhaps the inscrutability of such historical conundrums that makes them more interesting; they are continually open to new debate. Recent scholarship has challenged many assumptions about early Viking settlement in western Scotland. This encourages reconsideration of the primary evidence through the filter of new interpretations.

I have argued that, as the lands of former Dál Riata were divided up in the mid-ninth century, most of the Hebridean islands became heavily Scandinavianized. Gallgòidil appear briefly in a ninth-century context in Ireland, but they seem to have failed to maintain a foothold there. Gallgòidil then emerge as a people holding some of the former lands of Dál Riata in Bute and potentially around the Firth of Clyde. From these territories they may have extended their power around the Ayrshire coasts and then intruded into the area that is now called Galloway. A continuing southern shift in the focus of the lordship of Galloway can be discerned in the twelfth century.

⁹⁹ Hill et al., *Whithorn and St Ninian*, pp 55–6. ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp 48–55; Downham, *Viking kings*, p. 174. ¹⁰¹ Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 36. ¹⁰² G.W.S. Barrow (ed.), *Regesta regum Scottorum*, i: *The acts of Malcolm IV* (Edinburgh, 1960), p. 38; Clancy, 'Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway', 35.

The situation presented in western Scotland during the early Viking Age is of a complex mosaic of identities. Different levels of acculturation created distinctions between Gall, Gallgóidil and Gaedel. Furthermore, in their settlements north of the Solway, Vikings seem to have been agents of gaelicization as well as scandinavianization in previously mixed English- and Brittonic-speaking societies. The changing group identities in the Insular Viking zone constitute a fascinating indicator of a dynamic and formative period of British and Irish history.

Mind the gap: the supposed hiatus in Irish art of the tenth century

RUTH JOHNSON

This essay is intended to show that the generally accepted idea of a ‘hiatus’ in Irish art during the tenth century developed early in the twentieth century, in line with contemporary historical thinking concerning the impact of the Viking invasions on Irish society. Despite recent art historical studies, technological advances, chance discoveries and archaeological excavations, it is notable that scholars still rarely ascribe artwork to the late ninth and tenth century, the main exceptions being those brooches thought to be of Hiberno-Scandinavian type and a number of inscription-dated high crosses. Nevertheless, a strong tradition of ornamentation must have continued throughout this period to form the Irish contribution to the mixed styles current in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the gap may be down to subtler factors such as divergence in styles, patronage, workshop practices and media, and/or survival, recognition and firm dating.

The literature on Irish art of the early medieval period is as profuse as it is diverse and the closest to a modern, detailed and continuous history of Irish artistic development during the early medieval period is Peter Harbison’s *The golden age of Irish art*.¹ Any discussion of the period is both compounded and enriched by a knowledge and comprehension of the available sources. A factor that concerns and excites art historians and archaeologists is the consideration of what is *not* there and why gaps occur in the evidence. It is often in the absence of material evidence that archaeologists and art historians have turned to historical sources for explanations, which has inherent risks.

EARLY PIONEERS

In 1869 the Spalding Club of Aberdeen produced a volume on the Book of Deer, or Cambridge University Library MS li.6.32. In the text, John Stuart considered the history and provenance of the manuscript; its characteristics, style of writing and illumination; the date of the Gospels and marginalia and whether the psalter was of Irish or Pictish execution. He concluded that ‘the

¹ P. Harbison, *The golden age of Irish art: the medieval achievement, 600–1200* (London, 1999).

Book of Deer may have been written by a native scribe of Alba in the ninth century', drawing parallels with other related manuscripts of Insular origin, such as the Psalter of St Ouen, the Gospels of Mac Durnan and the Book of Armagh.² Stuart's probably represents one of the first and most extensive works of scholarship to be concerned with a significant item of Celtic art of ninth- or tenth-century date.

The same year saw the first brief journal report on the newly discovered Ardagh hoard by the earl of Dunraven.³ The hoard contained two chalices and several brooches of different types, one of which was a thistle brooch. Despite acknowledging comparison between the lettering on the Ardagh chalice and several illuminated manuscripts that he considered to date prior to the ninth century, Dunraven opted for a later date for the decoration of the chalice, stating that

the workmanship is of the highest period of that art, which, according to Dr Petrie, culminated about the eleventh century. The tenth century may, therefore, be taken as the probable period in which this beautiful cup was executed.⁴

The date of the Ardagh chalice was to remain controversial for over seventy years after its discovery, with scholars forwarding arguments for a date as early as 700 and others as late as 1100 before it was finally accepted as being a product of the eighth century and representative of a high point in Irish metalwork.⁵

Volumes I and II of George Petrie's *Christian inscriptions in the Irish language* were published posthumously in 1872 and 1878, edited by the art historian Margaret Stokes.⁶ This was the first attempt to collate all known monuments and artefacts bearing Irish inscriptions and included sketches of many artefacts and monuments hitherto unrecorded. It was in this work that Petrie first identified the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise and Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice as products of the tenth century.

By the turn of the century, enough decorated early medieval Irish material had been published to enable scholars to draw together diverse groups of objects for comparison. One of the first scholars to attempt a broader discussion of early medieval Irish art in this way was Stokes, whose first edition of *Early Christian art in Ireland* was published in 1897.⁷ Stokes observed the continuity and adaptation of pagan Celtic art motifs in the Christian period. She placed

2 J. Stuart (ed.), *The Book of Deer* (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 12. 3 Earl of Dunraven, 'On an ancient cup and brooches found near Ardagh in the county of Limerick', *PRIA*, 10 (1866–9), 458–9. 4 Ibid., 458. 5 P. Cone (ed.), *Treasures of early Irish art, 1500BC to 1500AD* (New York, 1977). 6 See J. Ní Ghradaigh, 'Authorship denied: Margaret Stokes, Rev. James Graves and the publication of Petrie's *Christian inscriptions*', *JRSAI*, 138 (2008), 136–46. 7 M. Stokes, *Early Christian art in Ireland* (Dublin, 1897).

considerable emphasis on the use of the spiral in its various forms, tracing its development and virtual disappearance from the fifth to the twelfth century and pinpointed the tenth century as the time when the pattern ‘fell into decay’. Conversely, from her study of the Irish high crosses, Stokes concluded that decorative Christian art ‘grew to gradual perfection’ from the ninth to the tenth century and viewed it as an art form grafted on to, rather than replacing the existing Celtic art of the pagan era. Stokes recognized the need for confident dating of key pieces in order to date comparative material:

The further the study of archaeology advances, the more possible it becomes to trace the existence and history of certain laws, which may be applied with more or less confidence to the formation of chronological classification of the objects they are dealing with. The first step in this direction should be to place in regular order the series of objects whose date has already been ascertained, so that they may serve afterward as landmarks.⁸

Stokes compiled a table in which she numbered examples of Irish architecture, sculpture, metalwork and manuscripts, ‘the dates of which can be approximately fixed’. In most instances this was achieved by linking artefacts with a definite historical association to a known scribe, artisan, builder or patron. This table lists only two illuminated manuscripts within the period from 900 to 1000, leaving a significant gap in a series that runs virtually unbroken from the early eighth to the fourteenth century. Similarly, only three items of metalwork are listed for the same period, although this sequence is considerably patchier than that supplied for the manuscripts. In considering architecture, Stokes noted just five examples of the period in her table, all of which are monastic buildings. It is only under the ‘sculptured crosses and tombstones’ that, as one might expect, a substantial number of monuments are listed for the tenth century. The majority of these are the inscribed grave-slabs, the high crosses of Clonmacnoise and related monuments at Monasterboice and Durrow. Despite the modern redating of some of the artefacts listed in her table, such as the Bell shrine of Maelbrigde⁹ – now thought to be a product of the eleventh century on art historical grounds – it was already clear that there were very few portable artefacts that could be dated positively to the tenth century using only historical methods.

In 1903 John Romilly Allen, an engineer and editor of *The reliquary and illustrated archaeologist*, along with Joseph Anderson, produced a pioneering work on *The early Christian monuments of Scotland*.¹⁰ In Allen’s *Celtic art in pagan and Christian times*, which followed in 1904, an effort was made to relate style to

8 M. Stokes, *Early Christian art in Ireland* (2nd ed. Dublin, 1932), p. 57. 9 R. Ó Floinn, *Irish shrines and reliquaries of the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1994). 10 For a full discussion of Allen and the compilation of this book, see Ian Henderson’s introduction to the modern facsimile

custom and setting, and to discover evidence for foreign influences through an analysis of the material. In it, previously uncontested conclusions concerning the origins of certain decorative motifs were challenged. Any Scandinavian influence in later Irish material was only tentatively acknowledged by Allen. He did, however, note that the ornament of the thistle brooches seemed to owe more to the Scandinavian than the Celtic tradition and that the zoomorphic element in Insular art may have been derived from an earlier north European source.¹¹

Allen had little problem ascribing artefacts to the tenth century where he considered that there was sufficient evidence.¹² Like Stokes, he noted three references in the annals during the tenth century to the enshrining of holy books with *cumdach*s. Nevertheless, his review of Celtic manuscript illumination led him to conclude that there was a period of artistic decline between the mid-ninth and the mid-eleventh century, stating that

the best period is from AD650 to 800; then from AD850 to 950 there is a middle period of rather inferior excellence; and, lastly, from AD950 to 1050 a distinct period of decline which went on with increasing decadence for a century or two after the Norman conquest.¹³

Allen's approach was to analyse individual patterns and motifs, with abstract motifs given almost equal weighting to zoomorphic and figural designs; thus his knowledge of the Scottish monuments proved to be very useful in this context.

By the early twentieth century, Scandinavian, Irish and British scholars were already concerned with defining Nordic art. The close relationship between the art styles of Insular and Scandinavian regions was becoming increasingly clear and the main focus of interest was to determine the donor and receiver of ornamental elements. The idea that Insular art derived from a north European source was overtly stated, in the same year, in Bernhard Salin's classic treatise on the development of zoomorphism in Europe,¹⁴ the first systematic analysis of Migration Period ornament in Scandinavia. By tracing the development through from pre-Viking art, he concluded that much of the animal ornament of the Viking period in the Insular world was ultimately Scandinavian in origin. Particularly relevant here was his discussion of the animal ornament on a group of four bossed penannular brooches, which he related to his Styles II and III (pre-800). Salin, like the contemporary Danish archaeologist Sophus Müller, recognized the relationship between Irish and Scandinavian styles but saw only minor Irish influences in a strong native Scandinavian tradition.¹⁵

edition of J. Romilly Allen and J. Anderson (eds), *The Early Christian monuments of Scotland*, 2 vols (Balgavies, 1993). 11 J.R. Allen, *Celtic art in pagan and Christian times* (London, 1904), pp 228, 249. 12 For example, the Book of Mac Durnan, which is considered to be of ninth-century date. 13 Allen, *Celtic art*, p. 176. 14 B. Salin, *Studier i ornamentik* (Stockholm, 1905). 15 Ibid.; S. Müller, *Dyreornamentiken i Norden* (Copenhagen, 1880).

In 1907 Philip Kermode's *Manx crosses* appeared in print. In it was a series of illustrations of each monument with the decorative motifs abstracted. Kermode's book, which includes an examination of the Norse iconography on the Manx crosses, was, according to Wilson, 'long on inscriptions and short on art'.¹⁶ At this period, there was no compendium of Irish crosses and Kermode relied heavily on the work of Petrie for Irish parallels.¹⁷ As Wilson has pointed out, 'Kermode almost never expressed an opinion on the dating of any of the stones'.¹⁸ Instead, he divided the sculptures into two main groups for cataloguing, that is to say, pre-Scandinavian and Scandinavian.¹⁹ He followed up this corpus with a series of articles on Manx crosses that had been discovered later.²⁰ The Manx crosses, once published and accessible to Scandinavian, British and Irish scholars, were to play an important role in the recognition and dating of Insular, and particularly Irish, art of the Viking period.

George Coffey's *Guide to the Celtic antiquities of the Christian period preserved in the Royal Irish Academy* and its sister book *Guide to the Celtic antiquities of the Christian period preserved in the National Museum* appeared in 1909.²¹ Along with Armstrong, Coffey also published a paper on the Scandinavian finds from the pagan graves at Islandbridge and Kilmainham in 1910. This was significant in that it presented a chronologically homogeneous group of recognizably Viking material of ninth-century date, along with artefacts of Irish manufacture, thus serving as a useful *terminus ante quem* for the Irish decorative material. Celtic art objects from Scandinavian graves went on to serve as fixed points for the dating of Insular metalwork (see below).

R.A.S. Macalister's *The memorial slabs of Clonmacnois, King's County* was published in 1909.²² This extraordinarily detailed study built on Petrie's and Stokes' earlier work on the Christian inscriptions and was supplemented by H.S. Crawford's list of early cross-slabs and pillars.²³ Macalister suggested a tentative typology for early medieval Irish grave-slabs based on a study of the evidence from the site and recognized a 'Clonmacnoise school' of fine stone carving in the late ninth and early tenth century. Crawford's descriptive catalogue of cross-slabs and pillars, which appeared between 1912 and 1916,²⁴ did not venture into questions such as the date of the slabs, but served as a useful regional reference guide to the monuments from sites other than Clonmacnoise, on which later scholars based their typologies and chronologies.

16 D. Wilson in P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx crosses* (2nd ed. London, 1994), p. 14. 17 G. Petrie, *Christian inscriptions in the Irish language*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1872–8). 18 Wilson in Kermode, *Manx crosses*, p. 19. 19 Ibid., p. 18. 20 Kermode, *Manx crosses*, appendices a–e. 21 G. Coffey, *Guide to the Celtic antiquities of the Christian period preserved in the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1909); G. Coffey, *Guide to the Celtic antiquities of the Christian period preserved in the National Museum* (Dublin, 1909). 22 'Notice of R.A.S. Macalister, *The memorial slabs of Clonmacnois, King's County*', *JRSAI*, 39 (1909), 402–3. 23 H.S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of early cross-slabs and pillars', *JRSAI*, 43 (1913), 261–5. 24 H.S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of early cross-slabs and pillars', *JRSAI*, 42 (1912), 217–44; 43 (1913), 402–3; 46 (1916), 163–7.

In 1914 Haakon Shetelig presented a paper to the Viking Society in London in which he discussed the Manx crosses in relation to Great Britain and Norway.²⁵ With his knowledge of Scandinavian scholarship on medieval art in Scandinavia by Sophus Müller in 1880, the art of the Migration Period by Bernhard Salin in 1904, and new evidence provided by the excavations of the Oseberg ship burial, Shetelig was able, for the first time, to place the Scandinavian stones of the Isle of Man in a chronological sequence. This work was later greatly to influence scholars of Irish art such as Hugh O'Neill Hencken who were to apply the Manx chronology in dating Irish artefacts by stylistic comparison.²⁶ Substantial monographs also began to appear at the turn of the century, devoted to individual works in stone sculpture or metal, such as Armstrong and Lawlor's analysis of the *Domnach airgid* shrine.²⁷

Allen's earlier work on the decorative vocabulary and the art of the monuments of Scotland was complemented by the publication in 1926 of Crawford's *Handbook of carved ornament from Irish monuments of the Christian period*, in which he aimed to 'illustrate the various types of design found on Irish monuments (notably high crosses and cross-slabs) of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries'.²⁸ Crawford's work was short, accessible and illustrated with photographs, showing monuments in their current state but also with reconstruction drawings based on his readings of the ornamentation. Crawford divided his text into separate sections, dealing first with the various classes of monuments and designs, followed by chapters on each type of pattern, with reference to individual monuments. Comparable motifs were also shown as line drawings, side-by-side, illustrating differences and similarities between designs.

In his earlier list of Irish shrines and reliquaries,²⁹ Crawford had drawn together all of the extant examples of Irish ecclesiastical metalwork purported to be reliquaries, with notes on their provenance, decoration and construction. This list included object shrines (book-shrines, bell-shrines and crozier casings) as well as those intended for housing corporeal and other saintly relics, such as the house- or tomb-shaped shrines.³⁰ By dividing artefacts into useful groups for comparison – not only according to material but also by form and function – Crawford paved the way for a more scientific approach to comparative studies. For dating, Crawford seems to have relied heavily on the work of Stokes. In the list of *cumdachs* and book-shrines, he included the lost shrines of the Book of

25 H. Shetelig, *Manx crosses relating to Great Britain and Norway* (London, 1925). 26 H. O'Neill Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1', *PRLA*, 43C (1935–7), 103–238. 27 E.C.R. Armstrong and H.J. Lawlor, 'The Domnach Airgid', *PRLA*, 30 (1918), 96–126. 28 H.S. Crawford, *Handbook of carved ornament from Irish monuments of the Christian period* (Dublin, 1926; repr. 1980), introduction. 29 H.S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of Irish shrines and reliquaries', *JRSAI*, 52 (1922), 171–6; 53 (1923), 74–93. 30 These might also be chrismals (N.X. O'Donoghue, 'Insular chrismals and house-shaped shrines in the early Middle Ages' in C. Hourihane (ed.), *Insular and Anglo-Saxon art and thought in the early medieval period* (Princeton, NJ, 2011), pp 79–91).

Armagh and that of the Book of Durrow as being of probable tenth-century manufacture.³¹ Crozier fragments were also attributed to the tenth century, two of them in accordance with Stokes' dating.³² For the rest, Crawford relied on later, mainly eleventh-century, inscriptions to date whole objects. Where no inscription is supplied, he rarely commented on date,³³ with the exception of the earlier portion of the *Domnach airgid*, where he follows Armstrong and Lawlor's dating to the seventh or eighth centuries.³⁴

NEW ARCHAEOLOGY

From the 1930s onwards, large-scale archaeological excavation reports on early medieval sites were being published. The trend was to date the early medieval sites loosely between the seventh and the tenth century, although the majority can now be seen to belong to the beginning rather than to the end of the period. One of the foremost archaeologists working in Ireland at this time was Hencken, who, with his Harvard team, excavated the royal crannog site of Lagore, Co. Meath,³⁵ and two hitherto undocumented crannogs at Ballinderry, Co. Westmeath, as part of a programme to establish a chronology for sites of the early medieval period. Hencken's 1936 report on the excavations at Ballinderry 1, Co. Westmeath³⁶ is significant in that it was one of the first papers to ascribe a tenth-century date to an Irish artefact purely on the basis of its decoration and, further, to apply this date to a site. His discussion of the wooden game-board initially focused on parallels with the stone crosses of the Isle of Man, which had been published in 1907 by Kermodé,³⁷ and placed in a chronological order by Shetelig.³⁸ Hencken's discussions of the board led him to draw conclusions on the provenance, if not on the approximate date, of the object. This report followed a more in-depth study of the same game-board in *Acta Archaeologica*.³⁹ Hencken was writing at a time when Viking studies were rapidly gaining momentum in Ireland and elsewhere, and being able to recognize the site as Viking-Age he looked to Scandinavia and the Oseberg wood-carvings for comparisons with the otherwise unparalleled three-dimensional head on the board.⁴⁰

31 Crawford, 'Descriptive list' (1922), 152, 154. 32 Ibid., 172–3. 33 Ibid., 170, no. 17; 162, no. 10 respectively. 34 Ibid., 155, no. 10. 35 H. O'Neill Hencken, 'Lagore crannog: an Irish royal residence of the seventh to tenth centuries', *PRIA*, 53C (1950), 1–247. 36 Hencken, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1'. See also R. Johnson, 'Ballinderry crannog no. 1: a reinterpretation', *PRIA*, 99C (1999), 23–71. 37 P.M.C. Kermodé, *Manx crosses* (London, 1907). 38 H. Shetelig, 'The Norse style of ornamentation in the Viking settlements', *Acta Archaeologica*, 19 (1948), 69–113. 39 H. O'Neill Hencken, 'A gaming board of the Viking Age', *Acta Archaeologica*, 4 (1933), 85–104. Emer Purcell has undertaken a more detailed study of the board in her MA thesis: E. Purcell, 'A reconsideration of the Ballinderry game board?' (MA, UCD, 1995). 40 Hencken, 'Gaming board'.

In 1932 art historian Françoise Henry made the first of her significant contributions to the study of Irish art with *La sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne*.⁴¹ This book provided a catalogue-classification of Irish stone-carving and dealt with chronology, iconography and style. Henry's classical training and continental European background brought a new dimension to the study of Irish art and archaeology. The 1940 edition of her seminal work *Irish art in the early Christian period* was an influential textbook for students of early medieval Ireland. As with Stokes, an important theme of Henry's works was to stress the Celtic contribution to Insular art of the early medieval period.

In 1932 Adolf Mahr, then keeper of Irish Antiquities Division in the National Museum of Ireland, published the first volume of *Christian art in ancient Ireland*.⁴² It presented 130 plates chosen as representative of early medieval Irish art, especially the metalwork, of the pre-Anglo-Norman period placed in roughly chronological order. Joseph Raftery followed up with a catalogue of early medieval metalwork, illustrated with a set of plates and an explanatory text to complement the plates in volume one. A number of the artefacts illustrated in this double volume have never been considered since. Mahr divided his artefacts into four period groupings or styles from 600 to the post-Anglo-Norman era,⁴³ as follows:

Period I	(600–850)	The vernacular Keltic (sic) style
Period II	(850–1000)	The Hiberno-Viking style
Period III	(1000–1125)	The last animal style in Ireland
Period IV	(1125–Norman conquest)	Hiberno-Romanesque style

Relevant here is Period II, which ranges from 850 to 1000 and is termed the Hiberno-Viking style. Like Stokes, Raftery⁴⁴ provided a sequential table of decorated artefacts spanning the early medieval period and using the chronological divisions outlined in Mahr's text with some amendments. The emphasis was on metalwork and objects were arranged into seven types – brooches, books, bells, croziers, house-shaped shrines, miscellaneous shrines and high crosses. Again, as in Stokes' table, a significant gap was apparent between 850 and 1000, to which only three brooch types and the high crosses were assigned.

In Raftery's volume, artefacts were classified according to periods and styles, although it is almost certain that much of the reasoning and compilation was shared by Mahr. Among those artefacts assigned to the Hiberno-Viking style were the silver thistle brooches. Raftery argued that this group was a

⁴¹ F. Henry, *La sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1933). ⁴² A. Mahr and J. Raftery (eds), *Christian art in ancient Ireland* (Dublin, 1932).

⁴³ The period groupings differ in vols 1 and 2. ⁴⁴ J. Raftery (ed.), *Christian art in ancient Ireland* (Dublin, 1941).

development of the bossed-penannular brooch series of the ninth century, but showing an even higher degree of Scandinavian influence. This statement was tempered by the conviction that they were of Irish character, and that the Scandinavians acted only as intermediaries in their evolution. Raftery was partly responsible for the lack of subsequent interest in thistle brooch decoration, the brooches being 'so uniform and display so little ornament that a minute description of detail is unnecessary'. He concluded that thistle brooches represented the latest stage in the penannular brooch series on 'Keltic soil', placing them towards the end of the tenth century and dying out by 1020, to be replaced by kite-shaped brooches and other forms.⁴⁵

Mahr and Raftery considered the eleventh century to be the main period for re-enshrining objects, but concluded that the Prosperous crozier and four other related croziers should be ascribed to the Hiberno-Viking period. On the other hand, they argued that no bell-shrine belonged to this period and amended the date given by Crawford⁴⁶ for the earliest portion of the *Corp naomh* reliquary to the eleventh century. Conversely, the earliest plates on the *Domnach airgid* were attributed to the late seventh century with the next phase of additions ascribed to the eleventh century. It is often difficult to understand exactly how these dates were determined, but a hiatus in tenth-century art was clearly by now a well-established and accepted idea.

In producing his *Corpus inscriptionum insularum Celticarum* for the Irish Manuscripts Commission in 1945 and 1949, Macalister built on his earlier work to provide a virtually complete repertory of ogham and uncial inscribed pillars and slabs from Britain as well as the inscriptions on items of metalwork of the early medieval period.⁴⁷

By 1954 the six-volume corpus *Viking antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, edited by Shetelig, was complete. In 1925 and 1926 Shetelig's team had attempted to catalogue every object found in Britain and Ireland that might be considered to be a 'Viking' product. Part III of this work contained a catalogue of the material recovered from the Viking burial assemblages from Kilmainham and Islandbridge, Dublin, as well as a list of Viking antiquities found outside Dublin.⁴⁸ Among those artefacts thought to be of Norse influence were silver thistle brooches and the wooden game-board from Ballinderry 1. Part V, published in 1940, also listed the Insular objects that had been found in Norwegian Viking graves. As editor, Shetelig relied heavily on British and Irish artefacts to illustrate his general comments on Viking art. Despite noticing that local variations were apparent in areas of Viking settlement, these were treated more as aberrations than as evidence of stylistic diversity.

⁴⁵ This linear development did not allow for the use of divergent types during the same period and, with the benefit of hindsight, has been shown to be over-simplistic. ⁴⁶ H.S. Crawford, 'A descriptive list of Irish shrines and reliquaries', *JRSAL*, 53 (1923), 74–93; 151–76.

⁴⁷ R.A.S. Macalister, *Corpus inscriptionum insularum Celticarum*, i (Dublin, 1945). ⁴⁸ J. Bøe, *Norse antiquities in Ireland* (Dublin, 1940).

HISTORICAL CONTROVERSY

A watershed in Irish Viking-Age studies came in the 1950s with historian D.A. Binchy's influential examination of early Irish law texts of the seventh and eighth centuries, which led him to argue that these documents were not relevant to a study of Irish society after c.800. This thinking was developed in two influential articles. The first of these, entitled 'Secular institutions', appeared in 1954.⁴⁹ In it, Binchy rejected the previously accepted theory of social and familial continuity throughout the Viking Age, arguing instead that the structure and institutions of Irish society were transformed in this period. In Binchy's view, the Viking raids were the main catalyst for changes in economy, technology and warfare.⁵⁰ This, he believed, led to the development of a class-based society in place of traditional tribal divisions and concentrated territory in the hands of a small 'landed' class. Binchy's 'catastrophe' theory was to become influential, if not wholly accepted, over the following decade and it was to colour Henry's views on the art and culture of the period. Poul Holm's 1994 summation of Binchy's 'theory of catastrophe' is that

the primary asset of the theory was that it stressed the social and cultural consequences of the Viking experience which had hitherto been neglected in favour of political history. ... But in the Viking field he had rather given a new twist to *Cogadh* propaganda about the devastating and murderous Viking onslaught on peaceful Ireland.⁵¹

In contrast was Máire MacDermott's paper, 'The crosiers of St Dymphna and St Mel and tenth-century Irish metalwork', read on 27 June 1955. MacDermott was the first scholar to examine the problem of recognizing tenth-century metalwork, commenting on

the curious gap which appeared to exist in native Irish metal-working between the spectacular achievements of the vernacular period (eighth to early ninth centuries) and the almost equally famed products of the so-called twelfth-century Renaissance.⁵²

Her review of contemporary literature revealed that very few pieces of Irish metalwork were being ascribed to the late ninth and tenth centuries, with the exception of 'some fragments of rather doubtfully dated reliquaries, a trial-piece or two', a group of thistle brooches and Hiberno-Viking brooches, both of which

⁴⁹ D.A. Binchy, 'Secular institutions' in M. Dillon (ed.), *Early Irish society* (Dublin, 1954), pp 52–65. ⁵⁰ See P. Holm, 'Between apathy and antipathy: the Vikings in Irish and Scandinavian history', *Peritia*, 8 (1994), 165 for a discussion of Binchy's views. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 165–6. ⁵² M. MacDermott, 'The crosiers of St Dymphna and St Mel and tenth-century Irish metalwork', *PRIA*, 58C (1957), 167–95.

she considered to be 'non-native types'. MacDermott's knowledge of the early medieval period and her common-sense approach led her to assert that 'a strong tradition of ornament in this medium [metal] must have lived on to form the Irish contribution to the mixed style current in the eleventh and twelfth centuries'.⁵³

In her descriptive analysis of the 'Kells'⁵⁴ crozier in the British Museum, which formed the basis for her doctorate, MacDermott had already been able confidently to assign a date in the tenth century to the earliest decorative phase of the crozier.⁵⁵ The extensive repertoire of the artist(s) responsible for the decoration of such a significant item of ecclesiastical metalwork caused her to question the scale of artistic disruption in this period and led her to suggest that other shrines and reliquaries may prove to be of similar date after re-evaluation. She concluded that two less elaborate croziers, those of St Dymphna and St Mel, shared a number of stylistic affinities with the Kells crozier and on this basis she also placed them in the early tenth century, thereby adding substantially to the corpus of material from this period. MacDermott went as far as to propose a degenerating arrangement for items of Irish metalwork between the croziers she had dated on stylistic grounds to the tenth century and a group of later, inscription-dated reliquaries.

The thrust of MacDermott's argument was that the quality of Irish metalwork declined over the course of the tenth century. She tentatively attributed this to coarser techniques used for the mass production of artefacts for trade with the new markets opened up by the Vikings. She argued that the increased demand, along with the unsettled nature of the times, led to a falling-off in quality for a period until the appearance of novel and vibrant Scandinavian art forms injected new life into native Irish metalworking in the early eleventh century.

In 'An open-work Crucifixion plaque from Clonmacnoise',⁵⁶ MacDermott applied the same reasoning to another distinct group of five ecclesiastical metal objects, a collection of plaques bearing early representations of the Crucifixion. Focusing on comparison of ornamental details within a small coherent group and drawing parallels with the Kells crozier and with stone Crucifixion scenes, MacDermott proposed a date in the early tenth century for the Clonmacnoise plaque. Whether the dating attribution was correct or not, her approach was important because it highlighted the need to reassess the traditionally accepted dates for pre-Romanesque Irish decorated material.

⁵³ Ibid., 168. ⁵⁴ Its attribution to Kells is questionable (G. Murray, 'Insular-type croziers: their construction and characteristics' in R. Moss (ed.), *Making and meaning in Insular art: proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College Dublin, 25–8 August 2005* (Dublin, 2007), pp 79–94). ⁵⁵ M. MacDermott, 'The Kells crozier', *Archaeologia*, 96 (1955), 59–133. ⁵⁶ M. MacDermott, 'An openwork Crucifixion plaque from Clonmacnoise', *JRSAI*, 84 (1954), 36–40.

In 1958 MacDermott (by then de Paor) reasserted her ideas on the chronology of Irish croziers and metalwork in a joint publication with Liam de Paor in *Early Christian Ireland*.⁵⁷ By this time, however, the opinions presented are less contentious, as is clear in the following extract:

While ... new arts in stone were developing in the time of the Viking invasions and wars, the art of illuminating manuscripts died and that of metalworking suffered a temporary decline. Some new types of metalwork of undoubted Scandinavian inspiration appeared in the tenth century. Native metalworking continued, mainly on a minor scale, but at times capable of producing fairly ambitious objects such as the Kells crosier, now in the British Museum.⁵⁸

In the same way that historical studies were heavily influenced by Binchy at this time, studies on early medieval Irish art were dominated in the 1960s by the work of Françoise Henry. In an important and complex piece entitled 'Remarks on the decoration of three Irish psalters',⁵⁹ Henry discussed three relatively unknown examples of Irish illumination of tenth- or early eleventh-century date in an attempt to bridge the gap that existed between the ninth-century Irish manuscripts (such as the Book of Kells, the Book of Armagh and the Book of Mac Durnan) and those of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. Drawing on her knowledge of Irish stone sculpture of the period, she also observed close parallels in stone for some of the figural ornament – between British Museum, Cotton MS Vitellius F.xi, Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice, Co. Louth, and the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly.

In 1961 Pádraig Lionard, a student of Françoise Henry's, published 'Early Irish grave-slabs',⁶⁰ the aim of which was to group recumbent grave-slabs of the early medieval period according to typology and chronology. Although acknowledging a heavy reliance on the works of both Petrie and Macalister, Lionard's dates were provided by Henry, who edited the paper and compiled the chronological list.⁶¹ A maximum of sixteen grave-slabs were dated, according to their inscriptions, to the tenth century. By linking chronology with typology, Lionard concluded that, by the tenth century, the fully developed expansional cross was almost the only cross form used on monuments of this type. Lionard presented a series of line drawings of the cross-slabs, showing the ornamental treatment of the stones in relation to the crosses and inscriptions. Examination of Lionard's drawings of those slabs dated by inscription to the tenth century

⁵⁷ M. and L. de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (London, 1958). ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154. ⁵⁹ F. Henry, 'Remarks on the decoration of three Irish psalters', *PRIA*, 61C (1961), 23–40. ⁶⁰ P. Lionard, 'Early Irish grave-slabs', *PRIA*, 61C (1961), 95–169. ⁶¹ Henry's dates for these and other inscriptions were published separately in the same volume, 'List of dated inscriptions with the corresponding entries in the annals', *PRIA*, 61C (1961), 157–69.

shows that the motif repertoire, like the choice of cross form, was very conservative on slabs of the period, with fret patterns, interlace, whirligigs and concentric circles the favoured motifs. In this way, the work of Henry and Lionard showed that monastic art continued to be produced to a high standard in these media, and that items were decorated according to form and function.

By the 1960s Insular finds from pagan graves in Scandinavia were becoming known outside Scandinavia and in 1961 Egil Bakka presented a paper to the Viking congress on 'Some decorated Anglo-Saxon and Irish metalwork found in Norwegian Viking graves',⁶² thus raising awareness of the movement of artistic material from one region to another and providing useful dating evidence for the deposition.

In the following year, Françoise Henry's 'The effects of the Viking invasions on Irish art'⁶³ opened thus: 'The first impact of the Vikings on Irish art was catastrophic'.⁶⁴ Henry was of the same school of thinking as Binchy and it is no coincidence that Binchy's second influential article on the devastation of the Viking invasions, 'The passing of the old order', was published in the same volume.⁶⁵ Henry argued that Insular metalwork fragments found in Scandinavian burial contexts were evidence for wide-scale Viking plunder in Ireland.⁶⁶ Further, Henry acknowledged only an indirect contribution from the Scandinavians to Irish art in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and argued that in the ninth and tenth centuries there was very little adaptation of Scandinavian patterns in Irish work and that 'it was a pagan art, only an object of loathing'. Whether this reflects the viewpoint of contemporary Irish monastic artists or Henry's own view is debatable.⁶⁷ Her unwillingness to accept that Scandinavian, pagan, art was in any way equal to Christian art of the period was shared by many other scholars at the time. Although it was by now fully accepted that Insular and Germanic arts developed from the same origins, there was an underlying assumption that the pagan adaptations of classical scenes and motifs were misunderstood copies and that Scandinavian animal art was purely decorative and devoid of deeper meaning.

⁶² E. Bakka, 'Some decorated Anglo-Saxon and Irish metalwork found in Norwegian Viking graves' in A. Small (ed.), *The Fourth Viking Congress, York, August 1961* (Edinburgh and London, 1965), pp 32–40. See also E. Bakka, *Some English decorated metal objects found in Norwegian Viking graves: contributions to the art history of the eighth century AD* (Bergen, 1963).

⁶³ F. Henry, 'The effects of the Viking invasions on Irish art' in B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples, c.800–1100AD* (Dublin, 1962), pp 61–72. ⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 61. ⁶⁵ D.A. Binchy, 'The passing of the old order' in Ó Cuív, *Impact of the Scandinavian invasions*, pp 119–32. ⁶⁶ It is probable that Henry regarded the material assemblages of all these sites as early rather than late. Prior to the foundation of towns, the monasteries were the great centres of Irish art and patronage, but Henry's preoccupation with the disruptive effect of Viking raids on the whole of Irish art, secular as well as ecclesiastical, was at odds with the evidence for the practice of high-quality metalworking on Irish secular sites of the Viking period such as the Lagore crannog, of which she was also aware. ⁶⁷ Henry, 'Effects of the Viking invasions', p. 66.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND REVISIONISM

In the late twentieth century, Irish Viking studies were dominated by historical criticism and revisionism. Only five years after Henry's paper appeared in print, A.T. Lucas was able to show that the often quoted annalistic references to Viking plunder were being used out of context to present a skewed view of the effects of the Viking incursions on Irish civilization. He estimated that between the years 615 and 1546 the various annals contain over nine hundred references to the plundering and burning of Irish churches. 'All in all, then, we are left with the indelible impression that plundering or burning was a normal hazard of a church or monastery in ancient medieval Ireland.'⁶⁸ He reasoned that the bullion value of much early medieval Irish metalwork of the late eighth and early ninth centuries was relatively small, with gold being used 'only in microscopic quantities in the form of gilding, filigree and granulation and silver not a great deal more lavishly'.⁶⁹ He argued that Viking raiders were primarily concerned with obtaining resources such as slaves, food and cattle, which were centred at monastic sites in the absence of towns. The reappraisal of Irish–Norse relations gained support in the 1970s, with historians such as Peter Sawyer⁷⁰ emphasizing the Scandinavian contribution to the political, social and ecclesiastical transformation of Ireland and Britain at the end of the early medieval period and revised historical perceptions of Viking activity in Britain and Ireland have come increasingly to influence art historical and archaeological studies in recent years.

Despite massive interest in Viking studies during the first half of the twentieth century, it was only in 1966 that David Wilson and Ole Klindt-Jensen together codified Viking art into a single scheme, which has recently been replaced by Graham-Campbell's *Viking art*.⁷¹ Prior to this, Viking art had been the subject of only a few lengthy studies of limited accessibility. Similarly, in Irish art no attempt had been made since Stokes' time to correlate all the material from the early medieval period in order to assess stylistic development – understandable considering the scale of such a task.

The balance was redressed with Henry's trilogy *Irish art in the Early Christian period*, *Irish art during the Viking invasions* and *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, in 1965, 1967 and 1970 respectively. This work served as an accessible, readable and well-illustrated introduction to the artistic achievements of each period and it is still used as a reference by scholars today. Despite the turning tide of opinion in historical circles, Henry continued to emphasize the destructiveness of Viking activity in Ireland and the disruption it caused to native industries. This is

68 A.T. Lucas, 'The plundering and burning of churches in Ireland, 7th to 16th century' in E. Rynne (ed.), *North Munster studies: essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick, 1967), p. 173. 69 Ibid., pp 172–229. 70 See P. Sawyer, 'The Vikings and the Irish Sea' in D. Moore (ed.), *The Irish Sea province in archaeology and history* (Cardiff, 1970), pp 86–92. 71 J. Graham-Campbell, *Viking art* (London, 2013). See the review by R.

particularly true of the second part of her three-volume work, *Irish art during the Viking invasions*, which reviewed the period from 800 to 1020.⁷² Here, Henry attributed the lack of metalwork datable to the ninth and tenth centuries to two factors: first the conversion of the Vikings to Christianity, which resulted in burial without grave-goods, and secondly the slowing down of artistic production due to the raids or to survival. The range of decorated metal objects credited by Henry to this relatively long period is quite small, including a bronze hanging lamp,⁷³ a few croziers, book-shrines and binding fragments, bells and bell-shrines, bossed and other types of penannular brooch, thistle brooches, kite-shaped brooches and pendant pins. From this group of artefacts, she concluded that the quality of the metal craftsmanship had degenerated, being slightly coarser with the effects being more 'cheaply obtained' than in the golden age of the eighth century, noting thicker filigree and less accurate animal interlace. Although Henry acknowledged the appearance of many novelties in the ninth and tenth centuries, she dismissed the new types of brooch and pin as 'showy in size, gaudy in colour, where the cold gleam of silver often replaced the subtle colour modulations and the technical triumphs of the earlier objects'.⁷⁴

In her discussion of illuminated manuscripts for the period, Henry cited four examples, which were for the most part placed in the early eleventh century, right at the end of the period. Again, the lack of manuscript evidence was ascribed to the depredations of the Viking invaders in the tenth century, backed up by a quote from *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*,⁷⁵ which claims that Brian Bórama

sent professors and masters ... to buy books beyond the sea, and the great ocean; because their writings and their books in every church and in every sanctuary ... were burned and thrown into the water by the plunderers, from the beginning to the end.⁷⁶

Henry's discussion of Irish stone carving in the tenth century was fuller given the number of monuments that remained *in situ* and those that could be dated by a number of carefully evaluated inscriptions. Henry forwarded a date early in the tenth century for a group of related carvings styled the School of Monasterboice and outlined a development for Irish high crosses from the eighth to the tenth century, characterized by a growing tendency towards more

Johnson in *History Ireland*, 22:2 (2014), 63. ⁷² Translated from an earlier French edition (H. Richardson, 'Preface' and 'Bibliography of Françoise Henry' in F. Henry and G. Marsh-Micheli, *Studies in Early Christian and medieval Irish art, architecture and sculpture* (London, 1985), pp 1–14, 313–25). ⁷³ From Ballinderry no. 1. ⁷⁴ F. Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions* (London, 1967), p. 112. The technical skills involved in casting thistle brooches with their large ball-shaped terminals were not explored by Henry. ⁷⁵ CGG, being an account of the destruction and oppression that the foreigners allegedly wreaked on Ireland. See K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: introduction to the sources* (New York, 1972), pp 288–94 for a discussion of the reliability of this source. ⁷⁶ Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions*,

massive structural monuments with the introduction of stone discs within the circle of the cross-head. Stylistic developments such as the increased use of figure sculpture and the more sparing application of abstract patterns were also noted. Henry stressed the continuity of traditional decoration applied in new forms and the proclivity for modelling of ornament in relief. She concluded that these monuments did not show any evidence for contact with Viking art, being influenced instead by continental models.

In summary, Henry (probably correctly) saw the art of the ninth and tenth centuries as paradoxical. She recognized the temptation to define it as a transitional stage between the abstract style of the early period and the figural emphasis of the medieval period proper. Nevertheless, like MacDermott, she realized that for Irish ornament to re-emerge as a key element in Irish Romanesque art, it must have played an important part in some aspect of tenth-century style. This led her to conclude, again probably correctly, that there was a divergence in style between craftsmen working in the different media and milieux.

Henry also divided Irish art of the Viking Age into two broad phases. From the beginning of the period and into the tenth century, she conceived of Ireland as the donor and Scandinavia as the receiver of artistic impulses, based on the belief that the Jellinge style was derived from an Irish source. She argued that only with the spiritual conversion of the Vikings, in the late tenth century, did Scandinavian-formulated styles begin to influence Irish artists and that, even then, this manifested itself only in motifs found on metalwork. Finally, despite recognizing that Scandinavian elements contributed to the production of ecclesiastical objects in the Irish Urnes style, she continued to play down the Scandinavian contribution to it.

The paradox between the art of the tenth-century high cross and the small body of ecclesiastical metalwork and manuscript illumination from the same period had continued to concern scholars since MacDermott had first drawn attention to it in the 1950s. In an attempt to explain this problem, historian Kathleen Hughes suggested that monasteries may have consciously devoted their artistic skills and patronage to the construction of massive stone monuments, being less vulnerable to theft than portable works of art such as books and church metalwork.⁷⁷ Such explanations, however, were not entirely satisfactory and it was becoming increasingly clear that more complex factors were at work.

In 'Two groups of ninth-century Irish brooches', James Graham-Campbell showed that, like the tenth century, the ninth century had also been comparatively

p. 59; CGG, pp 138–9. See P. Holm, 'Between apathy and antipathy', 151–69 for a discussion of the political and nationalistic tendencies that affected historical thinking on the Vikings in Irish and Scandinavian history. This early twelfth-century text is today considered by many to be a piece of O'Brien propaganda. ⁷⁷ K. Hughes and A. Hamlin, *The modern traveller to the early Irish church* (London, 1977).

neglected in studies on Irish metalwork, despite there being a considerable body of material that could be attributed to it.⁷⁸ He argued that a chronological polarization had caused scholars to date metalwork by comparison to the eighth or to the tenth century, but rarely to the ninth. This, he argued, was based on an ill-founded belief that Irish objects from Viking graves in Scandinavia and in coin hoards were datable.⁷⁹

Based on the distribution evidence, Graham-Campbell asserted that the bossed-penannular group previously classed as Hiberno-Viking, Hiberno-Norse and Anglo-Irish was actually an Irish brooch type. He argued that these brooches had been assigned to the first half of the tenth century through misinterpretation of the evidence of coin-dated silver hoards. Instead, he supported the hypothesis put forward by Máire de Paor and Liam de Paor in 1958 that the main development of the bossed-penannular brooch group took place in the late ninth century, even if their production continued into the tenth.⁸⁰ He noted that the change from a brooch hoop, of semicircular or rectangular section, to one that is completely circular, such as is universal with the thistle brooches, was a ninth-century development. Graham-Campbell went on to show that a number of other brooch types had been wrongly dated to the eighth century by dint of their inclusion in Scandinavian graves of the first half of the ninth century.

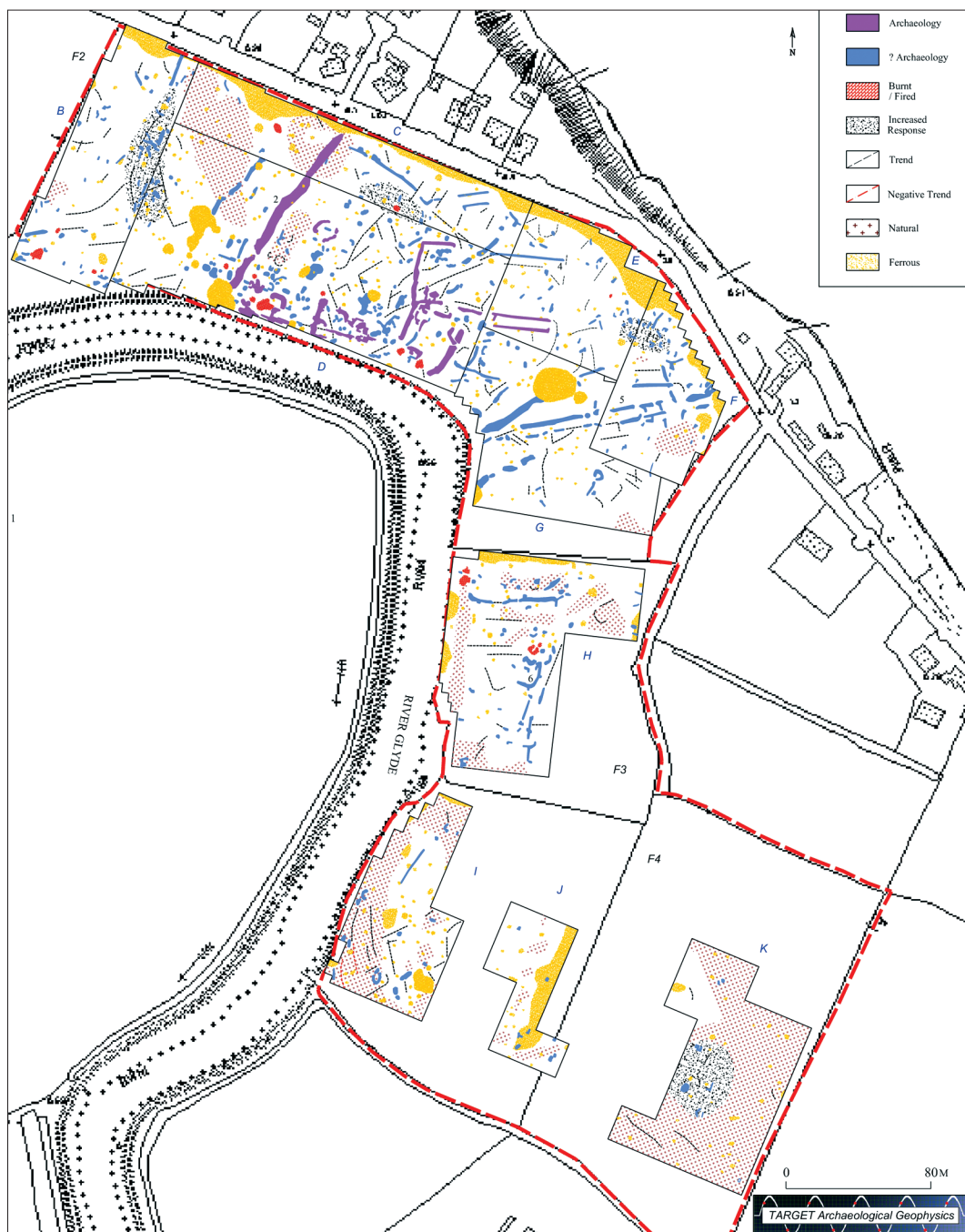
From a brief review of these two groups, he was able to suggest certain guidelines for the recognition and dating of brooches, as follows:

A ninth-century Irish brooch may be either penannular or pseudo-penannular in form; its ornament may include marginal animals and brambled bosses – indeed bosses, large or small, have an important decorative function during this period. A gradual decrease in the use of filigree and of settings is a ninth-century trend that would appear to be connected with the increasing use of monochrome silver as it became more widely available through economic activities of the Norse in Ireland.⁸¹

This paper was the first confident attempt to define the developments and trends of ninth-century Irish metalwork and an important starting point for any discussion on the art of the tenth century. The paper was important in that it also indirectly highlighted the massive increase in silver bullion in Ireland during the ninth century, used in the manufacture of monochrome, cast objects for secular patrons, serving an economic as well as a decorative function.

In the following year, Norwegian scholar Olav Sverre Johansen's 'Bossed penannular brooches: a systematization and study of their cultural affinities' appeared. Johansen's approach was one of catalogue and classification. His definition of the group resulted in the universal adoption of the descriptive term

78 J. Graham-Campbell, 'Two groups of ninth-century Irish brooches', *JRSAI*, 102 (1972), 113–28. 79 *Ibid.*, 113. 80 *Ibid.*, 114. 81 *Ibid.*, 117.



1 Summary interpretation of features at Linn Duachaill (Linns townland) revealed by geophysical survey (after J. Nicholls, 'Geophysical survey report, Linns td').



2 Part of the assemblage from the ARSNY site in north Yorkshire (© Trustees of the British Museum).

3 Pseudo-Arabic and Insular Viking weights from Yorkshire (© Trustees of the British Museum).





4 Site at South Great George's Street, Dublin, looking north towards the location of the pool (now the Dubh-linn garden) (photograph courtesy of Kevin Weldon).

5 Shield boss from burial F193, South Great George's Street, Dublin (photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).





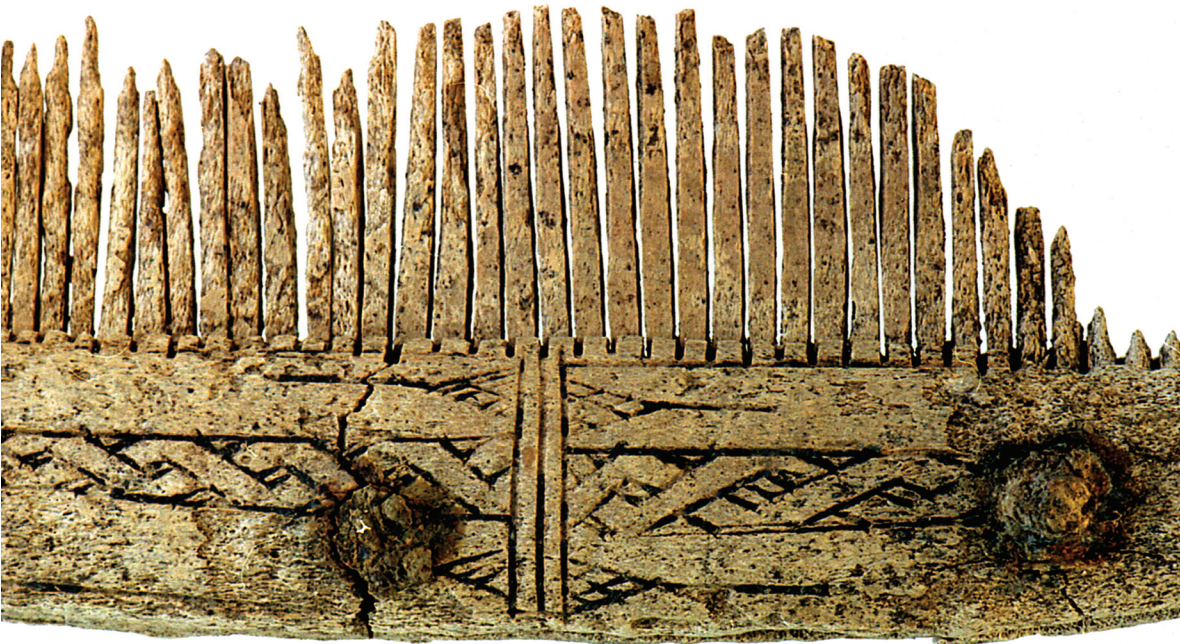
6 Skeletal remains of a young adult male, South Great George's Street, Dublin (photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).



7 Skeletal remains of a young adult male, showing the lower leg *in situ*, South Great George's Street, Dublin (photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).



8 Bone comb *in situ*, South Great George's Street, Dublin
(photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).



9 Detail of decoration on the bone comb from South Great George's Street, Dublin
(photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).



10 Grave-goods from Burial F598, South Great George's Street, Dublin: bone comb (99E414:598:2); unidentified object (99E414:598:3); iron blade (99E414:598:4) (photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).



11 Detail of the composite object of iron and copper alloy of uncertain function (99E414:598:3), South Great George's Street, Dublin (photograph courtesy of Linzi Simpson).



13 Selection of Viking-Age silver recovered from Woodstown, Co. Waterford (photograph courtesy of John Sheehan).



12 Ballinderry bow, held by Andy Halpin (© National Museum of Ireland).



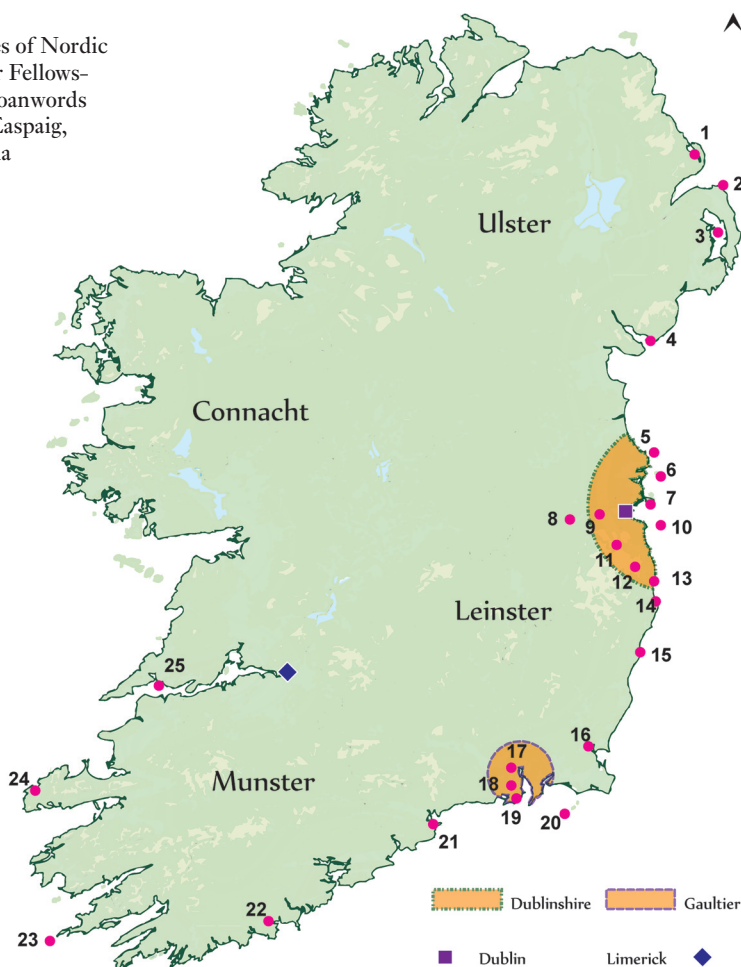
14 Six gold foil/simulated gold foil beads from Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny (photograph by Thorsten Kahlert; © Marion Dowd).

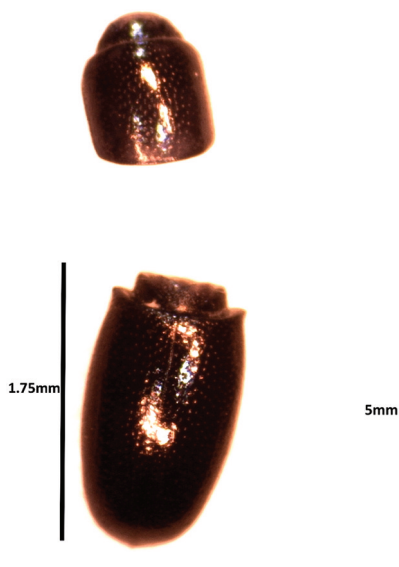


15 Ring bead from Dunmore Cave, Co. Kilkenny (photograph by Thorsten Kahlert; © Marion Dowd).

16 Map showing place-names of Nordic origin (by James Cahill, after Fellows-Jensen, 'Nordic names and loanwords in Ireland' and Mac Giolla Easpaig, 'L'influence scandinave sur la toponymie irlandaise').

- 1 Larne Harbour (*Wulfrichford*)
- 2 Copeland Islands
- 3 Strangford Lough
- 4 Carlingford Lough
- 5 Lambay
- 6 Ireland's Eye
- 7 Howth
- 8 Leixlip
- 9 Ballyfermot
- 10 Dalkey Island
- 11 Balally
- 12 Curtlestown
- 13 *Ballygunner*
- 14 Wicklow
- 15 Arklow
- 16 Wexford
- 17 Waterford
- 18 Ballytruckle
- 19 *Ballygunner*
- 20 Saltee Islands
- 21 Helvick
- 22 Kinsale Harbour (*Endelford*)
- 23 Dursey Island
- 24 Smerwick Harbour
- 25 Scattery Island



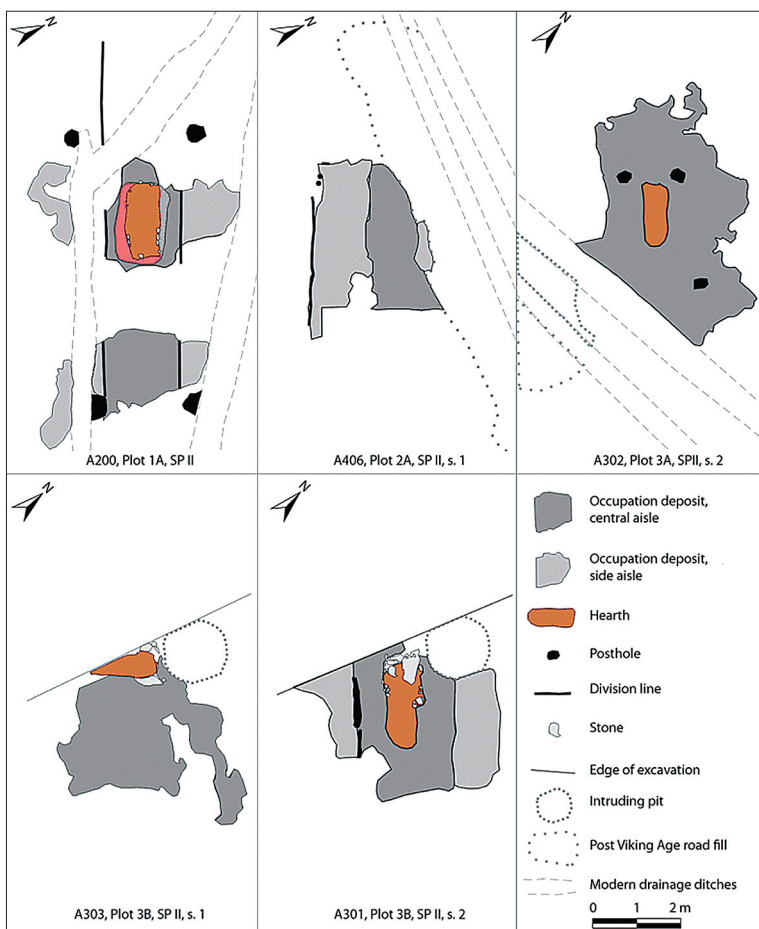


17 Head, pronotum and fused elytra of *Aglenus brunneus*. This typical 'house fauna' beetle has been identified from house floors in Viking-Age Dublin and York.



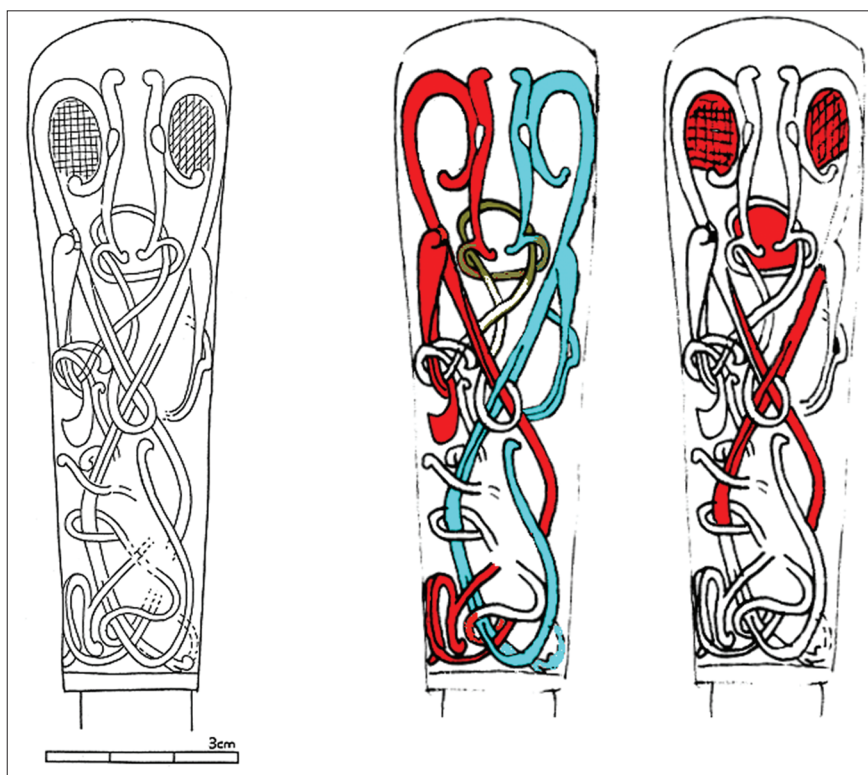
18 Head, pronota and elytra of *Trox scaber*. This hide beetle is found on hides, old bones and animal detritus.

19 Remains of the houses excavated at Kaupang, Norway. Note the similarities in internal layout – central hearth, three aisles and free-standing roof supports.





20 Carving trials, copies, creations and doodles on bone motif-pieces from Dublin (NMI, E122:15555, 11584, 18149; E71:3318) dating from the mid- to late tenth and the eleventh centuries. Various scales (photographs courtesy of Uaininn O'Meadhra).



21 Mid- to late eleventh-century Dublin knife handle DW49, showing dual readings of the lightly incised decoration as paired snake interlace and as a human mask. Analyses by Uaininn O'Meadhra based on documentation (far left) by P. Healy.



22 Cross of Cong, front
(© National Museum of
Ireland).



23 Cross of Cong, back
(© National Museum of
Ireland).



24 St Manchán's shrine from
Lemanaghan, Co. Offaly
(reproduced by kind
permission of the diocese of
Ardagh and Clonmacnoise; ©
National Museum of Ireland).



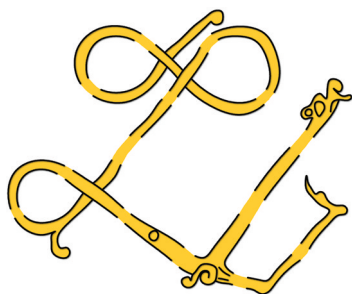
25 Decorative plaque from
Holycross, Co. Tipperary
(© National Museum of
Ireland).



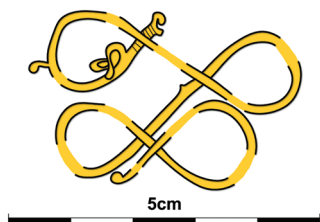
26 Market cross at
Tuam, Co. Galway
(© National
Monuments Service
Photographic Unit).



a

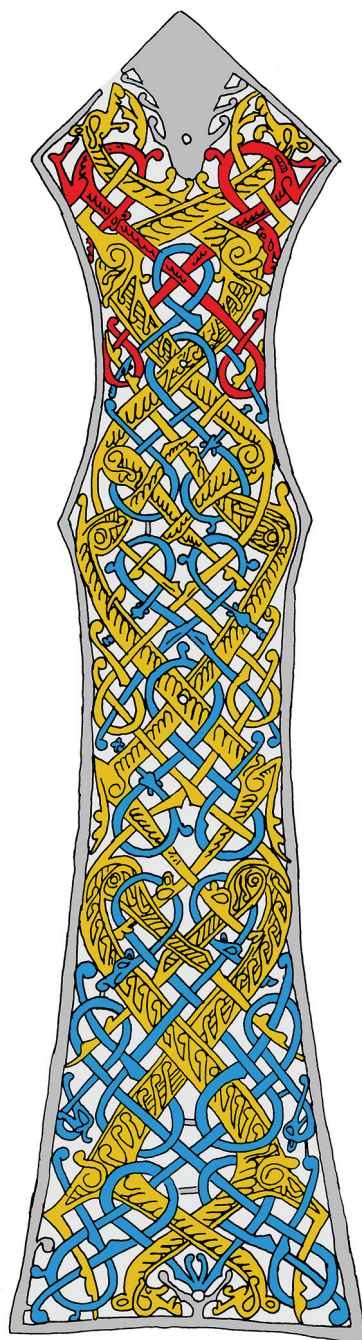


b



c

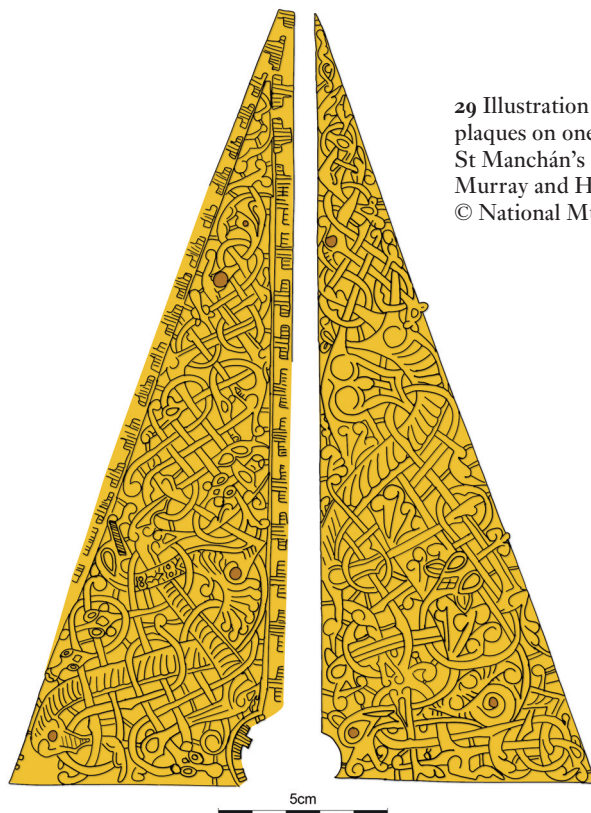
28 a–c Types of animal from the Cross of Cong (by Griffin Murray and Hugh Kavanagh; © National Museum of Ireland).



5cm

- Type 1
- Type 2
- Type 3

27 Illustration of the openwork plaque from the upper shaft on the back of the Cross of Cong, indicating the three different types of animal (by Griffin Murray and Hugh Kavanagh).



29 Illustration of the openwork plaques on one of the gable ends of St Manchán's shrine (by Griffin Murray and Hugh Kavanagh; © National Museum of Ireland).



30 (*left*) Figure from a shrine from St John's Priory, Dublin (© Trustees of the British Museum).



31 (*right*) Figure of a bishop from a shrine, acquired from James Underwood (© National Museum of Ireland).

'bossed-penannular'. The main aim was to assess the cultural affinities of bossed-penannular brooches. While Johansen drew parallels between the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon disc brooches and the network of bosses that characterize bossed-penannular brooches, he forwarded a Scandinavian and more specifically a Norwegian origin for this feature, which he saw as deriving from the oval brooch tradition. Though his attempt to trace the origin of attributes such as form and decoration revealed many Irish traits, and only a few Norse or Anglo-Saxon ones, this finding was more or less dismissed when attempting to assign the brooches to a specific cultural milieu. Johansen interpreted the distribution evidence as an indication that bossed-penannular brooches originated in a Norse milieu in Ireland and north-west England.⁸²

Graham-Campbell responded to Johansen's paper in 1975 with an article entitled 'Bossed penannular brooches: a review of recent research'.⁸³ In it he argued against their origin and manufacture in north-west England. In addition he showed that, with the exception of one sub-group, the brooches were not the product of a Norse milieu. Instead, he demonstrated that the group was firmly rooted in the Irish tradition, with influences from Scotland and England. He saw the distribution of bossed-penannular brooches outside Ireland as a secondary phenomenon associated with Norse activity. Finally, Graham-Campbell reaffirmed his earlier argument that the bossed-penannular brooch group developed in Ireland in the late ninth century and went on to provide revised deposition dates for coin-dated hoards containing them.⁸⁴ In both Johansen's and Graham-Campbell's reviews, stylistic considerations took a secondary position to brooch form.

In 1976 'The Viking-Age silver hoards of Ireland' was published by Graham-Campbell, the principal aim of which was to 'demonstrate the exceptional wealth of the silver and gold finds of the Viking-Age in Ireland'.⁸⁵ His analysis of the numismatic evidence indicated that the main period of coin-hoard deposition in Ireland occurred in the tenth century, from c.920 to 1000. From his study of the non-numismatic material, Graham-Campbell was able to recognize a specifically Hiberno-Viking type of arm-ring that made its first appearance in the ninth century.⁸⁶

Graham-Campbell was the first specialist in the field to challenge successfully Henry's argument that a 'hiatus' occurred in Irish art during the tenth century as a direct result of the Viking depredations, suggesting that

82 O.S. Johansen, 'Bossed penannular brooches: a systematization and study of their cultural affinities', *Acta Archaeologica*, 44 (1973), 114. 83 J. Graham-Campbell, 'Bossed penannular brooches: a review of recent research', *Medieval Archaeology*, 19 (1975), 33-47. 84 *Ibid.*, 39. 85 J. Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-Age silver hoards of Ireland' in B. Almqvist and D. Greene (eds), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15-21 August 1973* (Dublin, 1976), pp 39-74. 86 J. Graham-Campbell, 'Bossed penannular brooches reconsidered', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 9 (1976), 51.

what is involved therefore in a discussion of the initial impact of the Vikings on Irish art must be a comparison of the native products of the late eighth and early ninth century, with those of the later ninth and tenth century.⁸⁷

Using this logic, he was able to show that masterpieces of the early eighth century such as the Ardagh chalice and the Tara brooch were unrepresentative of the general standard of pre-Viking Irish metalwork. He regarded the late eighth and early ninth centuries as being 'a period of excellence perhaps, but not one of brilliance'.⁸⁸ In the absence of ninth- and tenth-century ecclesiastical metalwork, Graham-Campbell drew on his previous analysis of ninth-century Irish brooches. From this he was able to put forward three important ideas. First the high level of skill employed in brooch manufacture showed that the standards of Irish metalworking were maintained throughout the ninth century. Secondly Scandinavian activity in Ireland was directly responsible for the injection and circulation of a considerable quantity of silver – a commodity that had been in short supply and used sparingly in previous centuries. Finally the development of new brooch types in the late ninth century was a result, albeit indirect, of increased connections between Ireland and Scotland. Rather than having a catastrophic effect on Irish art, then, the Scandinavian presence in Ireland was in fact responsible for changes and novelties in materials, design and taste. Conversely, the material he reviewed did not seem to be indicative of an interchange in motifs and art styles until well into the tenth century. Crucially, he cautioned not to rule out an earlier date for the cross-fertilization of art-styles until the rich material assemblage from tenth-century Dublin had been fully assessed.⁸⁹

The traditionally held tenth-century date for the erection of scripture crosses was challenged in 1979 with the publication of Harbison's article 'The inscriptions on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly'. Harbison posited that the accepted date for the scripture crosses was based on a misreading of two key inscriptions, one of which was on the Cross of the Scriptures. Having re-examined the evidence, he argued that the group should be dated almost a century earlier, to c.830–40. Although this theory never gained acceptance, it did spark off another important debate on dating.

Henry promptly responded to Harbison's paper in 1980. In 'Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois',⁹⁰ Henry examined

87 J. Graham-Campbell, 'The initial impact of the Vikings on Irish art', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 20 (1978), 42–8. 88 *Ibid.*, 46. 89 See R. Johnson, 'An art historical and archaeological investigation into the so-called hiatus in Irish art during the tenth century AD' (PhD, TCD, 1997) for a detailed examination of the art historical evidence from context-dated sites. 90 F. Henry, 'Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois', *JRSAL*, 110 (1980), 36–46.

numerous readings of the inscription on the Cross of the Scriptures from the seventeenth century to the present and analysed their relative accuracy using casts made of the inscription. Henry concluded that Harbison had himself misread the inscription leading to an early date. Finally, and most importantly she drew on the decoration of the crosses to support the view that they were products of the tenth century on art historical grounds.

The discovery in 1980 of a hoard of church plate in the monastery of Derrynaflan, Co. Tipperary, added significantly to the corpus of Insular metalwork, extended our knowledge of early medieval European altar plate, and raised afresh important questions about patronage, craft organization, wealth, trade and exchange.⁹¹ More important here was the debate over the date of the silver chalice, made of silver and with amber studs – both materials that were increasingly available in Ireland through Viking contact. The animal style, and the manner in which amber is used, have links to the decoration of ninth-century brooches and suggest that the chalice was manufactured in the earlier part of the period of Viking raids on Ireland. The chalice is now generally considered to be a product of the mid-ninth century.⁹²

THE DUBLIN CONTRIBUTION

From 1962 onwards the Dublin city excavations began to reveal Viking-Age levels and preliminary results began filtering into the debate via a series of newspaper reports and, from 1969, by way of short articles in journals and conference proceedings by the excavators, Breandán Ó Ríordáin and Patrick Wallace. The first work to consider decorated material recovered from Dublin sites in depth was Uaininn O'Meadhra's *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art: motif-pieces from Ireland*, the catalogue of which was published in 1979.⁹³ In it, she included all the motif-pieces found during excavations at Christchurch Place and High Street prior to 1973, as well as several nineteenth-century finds from Dublin. Graham-Campbell was proved right as it became clear that the Dublin settlement evidence provided the key to the adoption and adaptation of Scandinavian artistic traits in the tenth- and eleventh-century town. In the second volume,⁹⁴ O'Meadhra examined the relationship between the motif-pieces and other artefacts found on the same sites, their dating and function. Ongoing analysis of the motif-pieces by O'Meadhra, Jessica McGraw and me is expected to help to elucidate the nature and intensity of artistic interchange in the tenth- to twelfth-century town. Preliminary results suggest that decorated

⁹¹ Michael Ryan, pers. comm. See also M. Ryan, 'The Derrynaflan hoard and early Irish art', *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 995–1017. ⁹² Extract from Ryan, 'Derrynaflan hoard'.

⁹³ U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art: motif-pieces from Ireland* (Stockholm, 1979). ⁹⁴ This was a PhD thesis.

metalworking was taking place in the town throughout the tenth century, with strong evidence for an intensive high-end metal workshop of mixed Hiberno-Norse style located in Christchurch Place in the early eleventh century.

In 1987 the proceedings of the first Insular art conference made a major contribution to the subject. Michael Ryan's paper, 'Some aspects of sequence and style in the metalwork of eighth- and ninth-century Ireland',⁹⁵ recognized three outstanding problems affecting the approach to the subject: the first was the need for comprehensive publication of individual objects; second was the absence of any agreed terminology for motifs; and thirdly he observed the lack of any objectively dated Irish metal objects of the period around which a sequence might be constructed.

Our chronologies are perforce based on inferences about relationships between undated Irish objects and dated, or allegedly dated, objects elsewhere. It should be noted that such inferred relationships are often with works in different media which were designed in accordance with different conventions for different purposes.⁹⁶

The dating and recognition of metalwork of the eighth and ninth centuries has a knock-on effect on the identification of tenth-century objects and Ryan showed that the sequence of Irish metalwork in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries had been constructed largely by reference to illuminated manuscripts such as the Book of Durrow, the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells, the dates of which are also largely inferential. Summing up, he argued that

we badly need new information, especially from stratified sites, studies of the smaller pieces ... alphabets of ornamental motifs ... and, above all, detailed published examinations of the corpus of major objects.⁹⁷

A major contribution to the understanding of artistic interchange was James Lang's discussion of the decorated wood from stratified contexts in Dublin, which could be dated independently of inscriptions or of style.⁹⁸ The range of wooden artefacts recovered from Dublin gave an exciting glimpse of an art form that is often archaeologically invisible. It was clear from this corpus that the type of decoration applied to wooden objects from urban contexts was substantially different from that seen in the Irish metalwork, manuscript illumination and stone sculpture of the period. Among the wooden assemblage datable to the tenth

95 M. Ryan, 'Some aspects of sequence and style in the metalwork of eighth- and ninth-century Ireland' in M. Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art, AD500-1200: proceedings of a conference at University College Cork, 31 October-3 November 1985* (Dublin, 1987), pp 66-74.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 66. 97 *Ibid.*, p. 72. 98 J.T. Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood: a study of its ornament and style* (Dublin, 1988), table 4.

century, there were artefacts that were representative of local Viking taste and Lang pondered that 'the domestic nature of the objects reduces the likelihood of the kind of restraint imposed by conservative monastic artists'.⁹⁹

Research by Thomas Fanning on ringed pins from Ireland and the Viking world culminated in the publication of the Dublin ringed pin series in 1994.¹⁰⁰ The number of stratified complete specimens of this chronologically sensitive type of dress fastener recovered during the National Museum and Office of Public Works excavations of Dublin was considerable. Post-excavation work on the building levels by Patrick Wallace and the dating by Debbie Caulfield enabled a sample of these pins to be given a deposition date to within a quarter of a century. For the first time, a typological sequence could be proposed for an artefact commonly found on early medieval sites of every type, from a ringfort or crannog to a Hiberno-Scandinavian town or a major monastery. The ringed pins now provide a useful dating tool for sites of the tenth and eleventh centuries in Ireland, where the usual archaeological dating indicators, like pottery and coins, are either not present or are unreliable.

INDIVIDUAL MONUMENTS AND OBJECT GROUPS

In recent years, literature has been mostly devoted to individual monuments, unique archaeological discoveries and discrete object groups, one major exception being Harbison's wide-ranging survey.¹⁰¹ The high crosses have been the subject of numerous articles and books, notably Harbison's three-volume catalogue of the high crosses of Ireland published in 1992.¹⁰² Although it is true to say that iconography and inscription dating have continued to dominate the high cross debate, new departures have been made in terms of identification of local and regional workshops, the technology of construction, proposed European iconographic models and early wooden precursors to the stone monuments by Roger Stalley, Dorothy Kelly and others.¹⁰³

In metalwork, Orna Somerville and particularly Niamh Whitfield have studied brooches,¹⁰⁴ with Whitfield specializing in filigree techniques. Michael

99 J.T. Lang, 'Eleventh-century style in decorated wood' in Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art*, pp 174–8. 100 T. Fanning, *Viking-Age ringed pins from Dublin* (Dublin, 1994). 101 Harbison, *Golden age of Irish art*. 102 H. Roe, 'The Irish high cross: morphology and iconography', *JRSAI*, 95 (1965), 213–26; H. Richardson and J. Scarry, *An introduction to Irish high crosses* (Cork, 1990); R. Stalley, *Irish high crosses* (Dublin, 1991); P. Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*, 3 vols (Bonn, 1992). 103 D. Kelly, 'The heart of the matter: models for Irish high crosses', *JRSAI*, 121 (1991), 105–45; D. Mac Lean, 'Technique and contact: carpentry constructed Insular stone crosses' in C. Bourke (ed.), *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain* (Belfast, 1995), pp 167–76. 104 O. Somerville, 'Kite shaped brooches', *JRSAI*, 123 (1993), 59–101; N. Whitfield, 'Motifs and techniques of Celtic filigree: are they original?' in Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art*, pp 75–84; N. Whitfield, 'The manufacture of ancient beaded wire: experiments

Ryan and Ragnall Ó Floinn, Paul Mullarkey, Cormac Bourke and Griffin Murray have all published research on ecclesiastical metalwork and dating continues to be an important and unresolved issue.

In the past twenty years a number of fine exhibition catalogues have considered Celtic art, notably *'The work of angels'*,¹⁰⁵ with similar catalogues focusing on the art of the Anglo-Saxon region.¹⁰⁶ Since 1985 there have been international conferences on Insular art approximately every four years with published proceedings.¹⁰⁷ Other publications resulting from conferences include the Book of Kells conference in Trinity College,¹⁰⁸ the proceedings of the 1995 Viking conference in Dublin Castle and the Cork Viking congress.¹⁰⁹ Art, though, remains a subject that is rarely included in the mainstream history and archaeology conferences and their resulting volumes.¹¹⁰

CLOSING REMARKS

The literature on Insular art is vast. By tracing only literature directly concerning Irish artefacts and monuments, it is not intended to give the impression that scholarship on this subject developed in isolation or to play down the importance of the broader cultural context in the early medieval period. Refinements in the dating of grave finds containing 'Irish' and Insular metalwork and of the Scandinavian art styles that came to influence and be influenced by Irish art towards the end of the Viking Age have helped to determine fixed reference points for artistic developments. Insular items from Scandinavian graves were published in Jan Petersen's 1940 catalogue of antiquities from Norway, which was built on by Egil Bakka in the 1960s and later by Egon Wamers,¹¹¹ who in the 1980s examined about five hundred finds in

and observations', *Jewellery Studies*, 8 (1998), 57–86; N. Whitfield, 'Motifs and techniques of early medieval Celtic filigree: their ultimate origins' in Moss (ed.), *Making and meaning in Insular art*, pp 18–39. ¹⁰⁵ S. Youngs (ed.), *'The work of angels': masterpieces of Celtic metalwork, 6th–9th centuries AD* (London, 1989). ¹⁰⁶ L. Webster and J. Backhouse (eds), *The making of England: Anglo-Saxon art and culture, AD600–900* (London, 1991). ¹⁰⁷ Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art*; Moss, *Making and meaning in Insular art*; M. Rednapp (ed.), *Pattern and purpose in Insular art: proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Insular Art, held at the National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff, 3–6 September 1998* (Oxford, 2001); R.M. Spearman and J. Higgitt (eds), *The age of migrating ideas: early medieval art in northern Britain and Ireland* (Sutton, 1993); C. Bourke (ed.), *From the isles of the north: medieval art in Ireland and Britain* (Belfast, 1996). ¹⁰⁸ F. O'Mahony (ed.), *The Book of Kells: proceedings of a conference at Trinity College, Dublin, 6–9 September 1992* (Dublin, 1994). ¹⁰⁹ H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998); J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010). ¹¹⁰ For example, at the Battle of Clontarf conference held in TCD in 2014. ¹¹¹ E. Wamers, 'Some ecclesiastical and secular Insular metalwork found in Norwegian Viking graves', *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 277–306; E. Wamers, 'Insular finds in Viking-Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 37–72.

Scandinavia of Insular objects from Ireland and the British Isles for the period from the ninth to the eleventh century. Three-quarters of the burials can be dated to the ninth century and most of the rest belong to the first half of the tenth. The Irish metalwork in these graves may indicate profitable campaigns in the west.

Chronological considerations have also been forwarded by studies of coins and objects found in hoards. Scientific approaches to dating such as radiocarbon and, more particularly for Irish and Scandinavian sites, dendrochronology have played an important part in ascertaining fixed points in the development of certain period styles.

Despite advances in dating techniques, the chronology for the artistic achievements of early medieval Ireland is still heavily reliant on a few 'fixed' points provided by manuscripts of the seventh and eighth centuries and inscription dated objects of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There is, as yet, no clearly defined and recognized common style apparent on Irish material of late ninth- to early eleventh-century date, perhaps because one simply did not exist. In this sense, Ireland is at variance with England, where the Trewhiddle and Winchester styles predominated in the late ninth and tenth centuries. Fixed points are provided by hoards and manuscripts, and work on the corpus of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture is revealing regional styles, especially in areas of Scandinavian settlement.¹¹²

Equally, in Scandinavia, scholars have been able to define and thus trace the origins and development of Viking art styles of the period. The Mammen, Ringerike and Urnes style have benefited from the scientific approach of Fuglesang.¹¹³ Here, the process of style recognition and definition has been aided by a relatively good sequence of fixed points based on numerous well-furnished grave finds and by studies of Viking and Insular Viking material from outside Scandinavia.

Approaching the Irish material is arguably more complex because the absence of well-dated key pieces has resulted in a series of floating chronologies, which need to be anchored before a definition of style can be attempted. Scholars continue to avoid dating decorated artefacts to the late ninth and tenth centuries, with the objects dated by MacDermott to the tenth century being once again drawn back into the ninth century or pushed forward into the eleventh century. We cannot continue to accept this 'chronological polarization'¹¹⁴ without attempting to define the artistic impulses of the period that lies between.¹¹⁵

112 R. Cramp (ed.), *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture* (Oxford, 1991). 113 S.H. Fuglesang, 'Some aspects of the Ringerike style: a phase of eleventh-century Scandinavian art', *Speculum*, 57 (1982), 609–11; S.H. Fuglesang, *Swedish runestones of the eleventh century: ornament and dating* (Göttingen, 1998), pp 197–218. 114 It is a natural tendency to associate the unknown with the known. See M. Ryan, 'The Derrynaflan hoard and early Irish art', *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 995–1017 for a discussion on the polarization of date. 115 M. Ryan, 'Metalwork in Ireland from the later seventh to the ninth century: a review' in Hourihane

The concept of a hiatus in Irish art during the tenth century as a direct result of the Viking invasions is, in my view, untenable. The tenth century was a period of immense social and political change in Ireland and elsewhere in western Europe, undoubtedly accelerated by the Viking incursions, which served as a catalyst to changes already under way by the end of the eighth century. Doherty¹¹⁶ has highlighted the need for a closer look at the written evidence available for the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries in order to determine whether the changes in language, place-names, art and institutions that have been attributed by scholars to the tenth century were already in progress prior to the arrival of the Vikings.¹¹⁷

By the tenth century, Ireland had already experienced over one hundred years of Viking raids and semi-permanent settlements, the most intensive of which occurred from 837 to 876. By the mid-tenth century, it is incorrect to speak of Viking raids as such, for Viking activity had become intimately bound up with contemporary Irish politics. Thus, if the *Cogadh* interpretation of the Vikings in Ireland is tempered with reference to other sources, it becomes hard to explain why it should be the tenth century, and not the ninth, in which the Viking raids had their greatest and most adverse impact on Irish society and its art production.¹¹⁸

In the art of the period gaps exist at different times in different media. This is especially apparent for ecclesiastical metalwork of the late ninth to early eleventh centuries. Luckily, there is written evidence to remind us that such artefacts continued to be commissioned. An entry in the Annals of Ulster for the year 1006 refers to the theft of the greatest relic of the western world (probably referring to the Book of Kells) on account of its wrought shrine and describes its recovery after two months and twenty nights, after having been denuded of its gold,¹¹⁹ and this must be ninth- or tenth-century Irish workmanship. Other books are known to have been enshrined at this time, including a cover for the Book of Durrow commissioned by Flann Sinna¹²⁰ and another made to house the Book of Armagh in 939 by Donnchad, son of Flann.¹²¹

There is also an apparent gap in the evidence for high-status secular metalwork after the first half of the tenth century, which is perhaps best

(ed.), *Insular and Anglo-Saxon art and thought*, pp 43–58; L. Nees, 'Recent trends in dating works of Insular art' in Hourihane (ed.), *Insular and Anglo-Saxon art and thought*, pp 14–30; M. Ryan, 'Ten years of early Irish metalwork', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 10 (1994), 153–6. ¹¹⁶ I am grateful to Charles Doherty for an interesting discussion of the different historical perceptions of the tenth century and for sharing his evaluation of the Viking impact on Irish society. ¹¹⁷ Doherty recognized that the First International Congress of Celtic Studies, held in 1959, was the point when historians, especially Binchy, and scholars of related disciplines first isolated the tenth century as a period of massive change in Ireland. ¹¹⁸ C. Doherty, 'The Vikings in Ireland: a review' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 288–330. ¹¹⁹ Ryan, 'Ten years of early Irish metalwork', 270. ¹²⁰ In 916 (*NHI*, viii, p. 41). ¹²¹ Ryan, 'Ten years of early Irish metalwork', 271; *NHI*, viii, p. 43.

explained as the result of conversion from pagan to Christian burial practices, to the reuse of decorative silver ornaments in economic transactions (as hacksilver) and/or to changes in hoarding patterns. The massive silver hoard deposited in the late tenth century at Skaill in Orkney may be a sign of what was happening to Irish or Hiberno-Scandinavian wealth towards the end of the period: it was changing hands, moving from area to area and being melted down and reused.

The dating of stone monuments leaves us with another apparent gap after the first quarter of the tenth century, but Doherty interprets the erection of the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise c.909–16 as a ‘self-conscious declaration of the maturity of the monastic city’ rather than any response to Viking attacks.¹²² Against this background of ambitious artistic and architectural production in the medium of stone, and continental influence, it is difficult to imagine that the same monasteries were unable to continue in the long-established production of stone sculpture, illuminated manuscripts and fine metalwork. High-quality sculpture did not simply die out to be reintroduced afresh in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; rather, scattered workshops continued to practise their own regional variants of the art.

The gaps that remain in the present sequence must therefore be regarded as the result of quite complex factors, including survival, dating, recognition and classification. Unlike for the preceding period, there is no common period style in Irish art of the tenth century, to be found across all decorative arts of varying forms, media and scale. Once these factors are taken into account, the historical reasons for any decline or hiatus in art – such as intercultural contact, changes in patronage, the availability of materials, and periods of relative political stability or instability – can be analysed more effectively by historians, art historians and archaeologists.

Finally, it is in the arts and crafts represented in the excavated building levels of Hiberno-Norse Dublin and to some extent at Ballinderry 1 that we have the most definite sense of continuity of production and development in Irish art during this period. The study of a large and diverse group of decorated artefacts, dated by context, has enabled the recognition of certain motifs and styles current in the tenth-century Hiberno-Norse milieu. It is anticipated that only through further examination of the art of the Dublin assemblage, and particularly the art of the motif-pieces, can we shed much-needed light on the amalgamation of Scandinavian and other European art styles into the Irish repertoire during this period.¹²³

¹²² The depiction on the cross itself is of the planting of the foundation stake of the church by king and abbot. ¹²³ I should like to thank the following people for their help with this essay, which was researched for a PhD at TCD: Michael Ryan, Griffin Murray, Terry Barry, Ragnháll Ó Floinn, James Graham-Campbell, Katharine Simms, Michael Johnson and Howard Clarke.

A man of two faces: Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill in Middle Irish sources

MÁIRE NÍ MHAONAIGH

In her recent edition of the Modern Irish tale, *Cath Cluana Tarbh*, ‘The Battle of Clontarf’, Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail explored in detail what she sees as an important concern of the plot in the narrative as a whole, namely the depiction of the Mide king, Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, also known as Máel Sechnaill Mór, as a traitor.¹ A contemporary of Brian Bórama of the Southern Uí Néill dynasty of Clann Cholmáin, he abandoned his Munster allies as the battle commenced, according to this late account of the encounter.² His betrayal is underlined by the fact that he is presented as advising the combined enemy force of Leinstermen and Vikings when to attack Brian. This deceitful plot had already been recorded by Geoffrey Keating whose seventeenth-century history of Ireland, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, notes that ‘do bhí do cheilg idir sé féin is Lochlonnaig nach táinig san ordughadh i measc shluagh Briain’, ‘as part of a deceitful plot between himself [Máel Sechnaill] and the Lochlannaig he did not join the battle array as part of Brian’s host’,³ and Ní Úrdail has demonstrated the extent of Keating’s influence on later versions of the *Cath* in this regard.⁴ Moreover, she has highlighted the debt that later historians writing in English also owe to *Foras feasa* in representing ‘an ineffectual and duplicitous Maol Seachlainn on the one hand ... and an honourable Brian Bórainmhe on the other’.⁵ Keating was not the first to portray the Mide king in a negative light and Ní Úrdail has also drawn attention to aspersions cast on Máel Sechnaill’s integrity in the early twelfth-century narrative, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, ‘The war of the Irish against the Vikings’, which was an important source for *Cath Cluana Tarbh*.⁶ The aim of this essay is to assess the depiction of Máel Sechnaill found in the *Cogadh* and other early sources to determine how contemporaries and those writing nearer his time viewed this midlands king. What will emerge is a man of two faces, whose development into a two-faced operator owes much to the concerns of later writers. A comparison of the many eleventh- and twelfth-

1 *Cath Cluana Tarbh: ‘The Battle of Clontarf’*, ed. and trans. M. Ní Úrdail (Dublin, 2011), pp 18–36, 67–77. 2 *Ibid.*, pp 108–9, 112–13, §§ 2, 5. 3 *Foras feasa ar Éirinn – The history of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating DD*, ed. and trans. D. Comyn and P.S. Dineen, 4 vols (London, 1902–14), iii, pp 284–5, lines 4474–7. 4 *Cath Cluana Tarbh*, pp 21, 72–3. 5 *Ibid.*, pp 25–34 (quote on p. 25). 6 *Ibid.*, pp 10–11.

century texts in which he appears allows a nuanced and complex picture of this able ruler to be drawn.⁷

COGADH GÁEDHEL RE GALLAIBH

That doubts should be raised concerning Máel Sechnaill's character in *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* is unsurprising, since this highly politicized tract is in effect a biography of his royal contemporary and rival as claimant to the kingship of Ireland, the Munster king, Brian Bórama.⁸ Written within a century or so of the latter's death in the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, this narrative served as sophisticated propaganda for Brian's descendants, specifically his great-grandson, Muirchertach Ua Briain. As successors to the great and glorious Brian, as he is presented in the *Cogadh*, and as members of Dál Cais whose irrepressible character is lauded in the text, Muirchertach and his kinsmen looked to the past to bolster their own power and position. To that end, enemies were rendered fiercer⁹ and the role of allies was considerably downplayed. In this context, Máel Sechnaill was destined to be in Brian's shadow, a bit-player, at best, in a southern show.

Accorded a place as king of Tara directly before Brian in the king-list with which the *Cogadh* begins,¹⁰ Máel Sechnaill is presented as subservient to his Munster rival in the body of the text. An agreement with Brian in 997 by which the Mide ruler was acknowledged as having claim to *dilsi Lethi Cuinn*, 'the sovereignty of Leth Cuinn [the northern part of Ireland]' in return for ceding Leth Moga (the southern part of Ireland) to his opponent¹¹ reads as inevitable in the light of military advances made by the southern king, including a successful attack on Mide.¹² Perhaps acting in consort, both kings inflicted a significant defeat on a combined force of Vikings and Leinstermen two years later in the Battle of Glenn Máma, yet in the *Cogadh* Máel Sechnaill is not assigned any role in this event.¹³ In triumphant mode, Brian is depicted as having the upper hand over the midlands ruler some time later, demanding submission of hostages or battle-engagement of him. Máel Sechnaill sought the assistance of his Northern Uí Néill kinsmen and, when it was not forthcoming, had no

⁷ There are a number of published accounts of Máel Sechnaill's career, including E. O'Flynn, 'The career of Máelsechnaill II', *Ríocht na Midhe*, 20 (2009), 29–68; C. Doherty, 'Máel-Sechnaill (Máel-sechlainn II; Malachy Mór)', *DIB*, vi, pp 228–31; B.T. Hudson, 'Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill', at www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17771?docPos=2 (accessed 25 Oct. 2012). Clare Downham also considers his activities in 'The Vikings in Southern Uí Néill until 1014', *Peritia*, 17–18 (2003–4), 233–55, at 241–4 in particular. ⁸ CGG. ⁹ This is most obviously the case in the portrayal of Vikings whose tyranny and oppression were well-nigh indescribable: see, for example, CGG, pp 48–53, § XL. ¹⁰ Ibid., pp 4–5, § III. ¹¹ Ibid., pp 108–9, § LXVI. ¹² Ibid., pp 108–9, § LXVI: *Ro hinred Midi leis co hUsnech*, 'Mide, as far as Uisnech, was plundered by him'. ¹³ Ibid., pp 108–16, §§ LXVII–IX.

option but to submit to his Munster rival.¹⁴ As Brian's ally, he is attacked by his Northern Uí Néill opponents in the lead-up to the Battle of Clontarf and an expedition he engaged in against the Vikings of Dublin at this time ended in defeat, his son being among the slain.¹⁵ When the men of Leinster also turned upon him, he sent messengers to Brian demanding that the latter prevent 'cocad gall ocus Lagen ocus Brefni ocus Carbri ocus Cenel Eogain in oen abull fair', 'that Vikings, Leinstermen and the men of Bréifne, Cairpre and Cenél nÉogain inflict war simultaneously upon him'.¹⁶ His plea is presented as having fallen on deaf ears.

Máel Sechnaill's men of Mide are listed among Brian's forces as the Battle of Clontarf gets under way. Nevertheless, the author immediately casts doubt on their loyalty: 'ocus ni ba tairsi dosum fir Midi, uair da fitir fein cotreicfítis é re hucht in catha sin, ce tancatar is in comthínol', 'and the men of Mide were not loyal to him, for he knew himself that they would abandon him at the beginning of that battle, even though they joined the muster'.¹⁷ This point is reinforced when Brian is depicted on the plain (*fáchi*) of Áth Cliath, accompanied by Máel Sechnaill, as well as other leaders: 'acht mad enni nir ba run oen fir ic feraib Midi re cach, no ic Maelseclaind', 'but it happened that the men of Mide and Máel Sechnaill were not of one mind with the rest'.¹⁸ That treachery is involved is made explicit in one of two manuscript witnesses to the text at this point, Trinity College Dublin, MS 1319 (H.2.17), when the battalions are described in detail. While Máel Sechnaill and the men of Mide are included as part of Brian's army, they were not alongside the rest of that host because of a pre-arranged plan of non-combat with the Vikings: 'ro bi in drochomarllí etorro', 'there was an evil understanding between them', is the author's comment.¹⁹ A ditch that is said to have separated them from Vikings²⁰ is alluded to in passing by Máel Sechnaill himself, in an account of the encounter he gives to his Southern Uí Néill kinsmen, Clann Cholmáin.²¹ Yet this testimony of a putative eyewitness implies that the Mide king was in the heat of the battle, though as bystander rather than valiant activist, and as an authoritative witness he has an important literary role to play.²² That he or his men were not involved in the action, however, is corroborated by the fact that no Mide man is included among the list of those slain on Brian's side.²³

¹⁴ Ibid., pp 118–33, §§ LXXII–VII. ¹⁵ Ibid., pp 148–9, § LXXXIV. ¹⁶ Ibid., pp 148–9, § LXXXV. ¹⁷ Ibid., pp 154–5, § LXXXVIII. ¹⁸ Ibid. ¹⁹ Ibid., pp 168–9, § XCVI. ²⁰ Ibid.: 'uair ba hi comarllí gall in aidaich remi dó, clad [do chur] etorro ocus gaill, ocus mini insaigtis siun gaill, ni insaigfítis gaill iatsium, ocus is amlaid sin da ronsat', 'because the counsel of the Vikings the previous night had been to put a ditch between themselves and Vikings and that if they did not attack Vikings, Vikings would not attack them, and it is thus they did'. ²¹ One month after the battle, according to one of two manuscript witnesses to this part of the text, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 2569–72 in the hand of Míchéal Ó Cléirigh (CGG, p. 182, n. 1). ²² CGG, pp 182–3, § CIII. This passage is discussed in M. Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru: Ireland's greatest king?* (Stroud, 2008), p. 68. ²³ CGG, pp 209–10,

In literature concerning his contemporary, Brian Bórama, therefore, Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill is not allowed to shine. Moreover, the allegation of betrayal on his part present in both manuscript copies of the *Cogadh* is considerably reinforced in one version of the text, as we have seen. This passage is one of a number of interpolations preserved in this fourteenth-century manuscript inserted into the narrative in an earlier copy of the text. In a previous publication, I suggested that this additional material represents a reworking of the narrative in the mid-twelfth century on behalf of Tigernán Ua Ruairc.²⁴ Ruler of neighbouring Bréifne, he sought to intervene frequently in Mide affairs. That a scribe writing in his interest should take every opportunity to cast aspersions on Uí Mail Shechnaill, descendants of Máel Sechnaill and inveterate opponents of the expansionist policies of his patron, is to be expected.²⁵ As well as providing a detailed account of their treacherous activities on the eve of Clontarf, he inserted a poem attributed to Gilla Comgaill Ua Sléibín (d. 1031) that takes particular delight in the subordinate position of Máel Sechnaill himself.²⁶ A writer partisan to Uí Briain composing the *Cogadh* in the early years of the twelfth century may have berated Máel Sechnaill, but his castigation at the hands of an Ua Ruairc redactor reshaping the narrative some thirty or forty years later was much more severe.

THE PORTRAYAL OF MÁEL SECHNAILL IN ANNALISTIC SOURCES

Less biased observers of these events do not allude to treachery on Máel Sechnaill's part, but chronicle writers also accord him a subservient role in the Battle of Clontarf.²⁷ Although he is co-leader of the expedition, alongside Brian Bórama, in the Annals of Ulster, as 'king of Tara' (*rí Temhrach*), he is subordinate to the Munster king, who not alone is named first but is also hailed as 'king of Ireland' (*rí Érenn*).²⁸ The dependent chronicle, the Annals of Loch Cé, does not depict Máel Sechnaill as a leader in the encounter, but the men of Mide are specifically mentioned as Brian's allies therein.²⁹ Uniquely among annalistic

§ CXVIII. ²⁴ M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias in *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*', *Ériu*, 43 (1992), 135–58. ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 150–1. ²⁶ *CGG*, pp 120–7. For discussion, see Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias', 152–3. ²⁷ He is not mentioned at all in the brief entry on the battle in the Munster compilation, the Annals of Inisfallen (*AI*, s.a. 1014). ²⁸ *AU*, s.a. 1014; cf. *CS*, s.a. 1012; *AFM*, s.a. 1013; A.M. Freeman (ed. and trans.), 'The annals in Cotton MS Titus A. XXV', *Revue celtique*, 41 (1924), 328 (also known as the Annals of Boyle). ²⁹ *ALC*, s.a. 1014: 'Mór thionól fher Muman ocus Midhe ocus deiscert Connacht lá mBrián mBórama mac Cinnéidigh .i. rí Ereann, for ghallaibh Atha Clíath ocus for Laighnibh ... Níor thionóil, immorro, Brián slóigh ináid sochraide indaghaidh an mor sluaighed sin íarthair dhomain ocus Gall, acht Muimhnig amháin ocus Moeilshechlainn co bferaihbh Midhe', 'A great assemblage of the men of Munster and Mide and the south of Connacht by Brian Bórama son of Cennétig, i.e. the king of Ireland against the Vikings of Dublin and the Leinstermen ... Brian, however, assembled neither host nor multitude against this great army of the west of the world

accounts, the seventeenth-century compilation, the Annals of the Four Masters, accords Máel Sechnaill a role in the battle, stating that he fought bravely against Vikings and Leinstermen *ó Thulcaind co hAth Cliath*, 'from the River Tolka to Áth Cliath'.³⁰ Neither in this nor in any other annal entry, however, are his Mide followers listed among the dead. It is unlikely, therefore, that they played a significant part in the Battle of Clontarf.³¹

Máel Sechnaill was active in the lead-up to the battle, however, as *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* suggests. While the Munster tract portrays his forays against his Northern Uí Néill counterpart, Flaithbertach ua Néill, in 1013 as being directed by Brian, annalistic compilations imply more realistically that his attack on the Cenél nEógain ruler was a reaction against the latter's attempt to extend his power over Cenél Conaill and Ulaid territories.³² Máel Sechnaill's counter-offensive was in vain and he was forced to retreat before his more powerful northern neighbour in 1013.³³ In the same year, he also engaged an enemy farther south, marching against the Norse of Dublin as far as Howth.³⁴ On this expedition, too, he was defeated in the Battle of Drinan (near Coolock, Co. Dublin), his son, Flann, being slain in the encounter.³⁵ Allying himself with Brian that winter as the Munster king prepared to launch an attack on his opponents may have seemed the most sensible course of action to take.³⁶

The battle that ensued at Clontarf in 1014 involved an enemy force familiar to the Mide ruler. In his first major conflict, the Battle of Tara, at the beginning of his reign in 980, he defeated a combined host of Vikings from Dublin and the Isles in a victory described in exultant terms in the Annals of Ulster, resulting in *nert Gall a hErinn*, 'the ejection of foreign power from Ireland'.³⁷ Among the slain was Ragnall, a son of Amlaíb Cuarán, and Amlaíb's own position was considerably weakened; he retired a year later on pilgrimage to Iona, where he died.³⁸ His successor was his son, Glún Iairn, who was Máel Sechnaill's uterine brother with whom the latter appears to have been on friendly terms.³⁹ On Glún

and of Vikings but the men of Munster alone, and Máel Sechnaill with the men of Mide'.

³⁰ *AFM*, s.a. 1013. Ní Úrdail has drawn attention to a poem by one of the Four Masters, Fear Feasa Ó Maoil Chonaire, praising Máel Sechnaill as the 'true ruler' (*fíorfhlaith*) of Ireland (*Cath Cluana Tárhbh*, p. 24). ³¹ Clare Downham has concluded that Máel Sechnaill did fight at Clontarf, but 'Dál Cais propaganda denied him a place in the battle, although his contribution may not have been as great as the account found in [the] Annals of the Four Masters allows. The conflicting records seem to reflect real and imagined rivalry between the two great overkings' ('Vikings in Southern Uí Néill', 243). ³² D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), p. 128. ³³ *AU*, s.a. 1012; *CS*, s.a. 1011. ³⁴ *CS*, s.a. 1011. ³⁵ *AU*, s.a. 1012. ³⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin has suggested that Máel Sechnaill may have specifically sought Brian's assistance after his defeat at Drinan (*Ireland before the Normans*, p. 128). ³⁷ *AU*, s.a. 979. ³⁸ *AT*, p. 234. ³⁹ Together with his half-brother, he attacked Domnall Cláen and Ímar of Waterford in 983 (*AU*, s.a. 982; cf. *CS*, s.a. 981; *AFM*, s.a. 982). Their relationship is specified in the Middle Irish *Banshenchas*, 'Lore of Women': 'Dunlait ingen Muircertaig m. Neill Glunduib, mathair Mael Eaclind m. Domnaill rig Teamrach 7 Glun Iarinnd m. Amlaim rig Gall', 'Dúnlaith daughter of Muirchertach mac Néill, was the

Iairn's death in 989,⁴⁰ however, the midlands ruler plundered Dublin again and was victorious. A Viking–Leinster alliance retaliated the following year⁴¹ and the Norse of Dublin, in consort with the men of Brega, attacked Mide again in 995.⁴² In 998 and perhaps again in 999 at Glenn Máma, in an alliance of convenience, Máel Sechnaill sided with Brian Bórama against the Dublin Vikings.⁴³ As equally ambitious, expansionist rulers, the natural state of their relations was confrontational, however; conciliatory overtures were in the main designed for short-term gain.

When Máel Sechnaill's power had been in the ascendant, he clearly had had no need of Brian Bórama's support. Shortly after the Battle of Tara in 980, the Clonmacnoise group of annals note that he plundered the Munster king's heartland of Dál Cais and cut down the sacred tree of Mag Adair.⁴⁴ Brian appears not to have reacted immediately, according to these compilations. When Máel Sechnaill ravaged Leinster as far as the sea the following year,⁴⁵ however, the southern ruler attacked western Mide.⁴⁶ The midlands king was not deterred and is recorded (in the Annals of Ulster, as well as in the Clonmacnoise-group texts) as having plundered Connacht the following year, though a retaliatory strike on Loch Aininn in Mide by the men of Connacht was immediately undertaken.⁴⁷ Máel Sechnaill's victory at Dublin at the end of that decade demonstrated his considerable power again. Once more he turned his attention southwards and in 990 won the Battle of Fordroma in Brian's home territory of Tuadmumu.⁴⁸ He slew the heir-designate of Tara the following year⁴⁹ and was active in Connachta again, bringing away *gabala mora*, 'great spoils' in 992.⁵⁰ Events nearer home were his concern a year later when he killed the king of Luigne;⁵¹ he proved equally ruthless against opponents on other occasions, blinding a local rival, Domnall mac Donnchada Finn, who had made gains in Airgialla in 997.⁵² The Clonmacnoise-group texts suggest that he was particularly powerful around this time, attacking Brian Bórama in Munster in 994⁵³ and taking the symbolic

mother of Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, king of Tara, and of Glún Iairn mac Amlaíb, king of the foreigners' (M.E. Dobbs, 'The Ban-shenchus', *Revue celtique*, 48 (1931), 226–7). ⁴⁰ The Annals of Ulster (s.a. 988) claim that he was killed *dia moghaidh fein i meisce*, 'by his own slave when drunk'. ⁴¹ *AFM*, s.a. 989. ⁴² *CS*, s.a. 993; *AT*, pp 241–2; *AFM*, s.a. 994. ⁴³ *CS*, s.a. 996–7; *AT*, p. 243; *AFM*, s.a. 997–8. ⁴⁴ *AT*, p. 235; *CS*, s.a. 980; *AFM*, s.a. 981. I use the term 'Clonmacnoise-group annals' etc. to refer primarily to the Annals of Tigernach and *Chronicum Scotorum*, which are agreed to share a common source (G. Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals* (Dublin, 1975), pp 20, 34; K. Grabowski and D. Dumville, *Chronicles and annals of mediaeval Ireland and Wales* (Woodbridge, 1984), p. 6; N. Evans, *The present and the past in medieval Irish chronicles* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 2). Other compilations display an affinity with these two chronicles, including the Annals of Boyle and the seventeenth-century compilations, the Annals of the Four Masters and the Annals of Clonmacnoise, and their entries are also mentioned where relevant. ⁴⁵ *AT*, p. 235; *CS*, s.a. 981; *AFM*, s.a. 982. ⁴⁶ *AFM*, s.a. 983. ⁴⁷ *AU*, s.a. 984; *AT*, p. 236; *CS*, s.a. 983; *AFM*, s.a. 984. ⁴⁸ *AU*, s.a. 989. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, s.a. 990. ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, s.a. 991. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, s.a. 992; *AT*, p. 240; *AFM*, s.a. 992. ⁵² *AU*, s.a. 996; *AT*, p. 243; *AFM*, s.a. 996. ⁵³ *AT*, p. 241; *CS*, s.a. 992; *AFM*, s.a. 993.

objects, Tomar's ring and the sword of Carlus, by force from the Dublin Vikings the following year.⁵⁴

According to the Annals of Inisfallen, however, Brian and Máel Sechnaill came to an agreement in 997 whereby Ireland was divided between them, Leth Cuinn (the northern half of the country) being assigned to the Mide king and Leth Moga (the southern half) going to Brian. As part of this arrangement, Máel Sechnaill bestowed the hostages of Leinster and Dublin upon his Munster counterpart.⁵⁵ A number of chronicles note that a joint expedition was undertaken by the two rulers to acquire further hostages from the Norse of Dublin the following year.⁵⁶ A hosting to Connacht for the same purpose is ascribed to both leaders in *Chronicum Scotorum*,⁵⁷ but is deemed to have been undertaken by Máel Sechnaill alone in the Annals of Ulster,⁵⁸ while the Annals of Inisfallen ascribe the taking of Connacht hostages to Brian who then sequestered them to the midlands ruler.⁵⁹

Whether their cooperation was still in place in 999 is a moot question since the Battle of Glenn Máma, which was fought against the Dublin Norse in that year, is variously recorded as an expedition led jointly by Brian Bórama and Máel Sechnaill,⁶⁰ and by the Munster king alone.⁶¹ In any event, despite holding sway over a force of Connacht, Osraige and Leinstermen, augmented by the Dublin Norse, Brian was forced by Máel Sechnaill to retreat swiftly without giving battle when he marched into Brega the following year.⁶² The Munstermen soon returned and plundered the south of Mide in 1001.⁶³ Together with his Connacht counterpart, Cathal mac Conchobair, Máel Sechnaill constructed a causeway at Athlone around this time,⁶⁴ presumably in an attempt to stall Brian. Notwithstanding this, *Chronicum Scotorum* attributes Brian's accession to the kingship of Ireland to this year⁶⁵ and his superiority is underlined by the fact that he acquired the hostages of Mide, together with those of Connacht, at Athlone in the following year.⁶⁶ Presumably as a consequence of this, Máel Sechnaill and

54 *AT*, p. 242; *CS*, s.a. 993; *AFM*, s.a. 994. 55 *AI*, s.a. 997. 56 *AU*, s.a. 997; *CS*, s.a. 996; *AFM*, s.a. 997. 57 *CS*, s.a. 996. 58 *AU*, s.a. 997; cf. *AFM*, s.a. 997. Brian was engaged in a hosting to Leinster at the time; Máel Sechnaill is described as plundering Leinster two years later (*AU*, s.a. 998). 59 *AI*, s.a. 998. 60 *AT*, p. 244; *CS*, s.a. 997; *AFM*, s.a. 998. 61 *AU*, s.a. 998; *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* similarly omits any mention of Máel Sechnaill in connection with the encounter, as we have seen. Ailbhe MacShamhráin was of the opinion that only Brian was present, seeing the battle as a key stage in the power struggle between the two rulers, victory therein according the Munster king 'a psychological advantage' over his long-term challenger ('The Battle of Glenn Máma' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2000* (Dublin, 2001), p. 63). 62 *AU*, s.a. 999; *AT*, p. 245; *CS*, s.a. 998; *AFM*, s.a. 999. 63 *AU*, s.a. 1000; *AT*, p. 246. 64 *AU*, s.a. 1000; *CS*, s.a. 999; *AFM*, s.a. 1000. 65 *CS*, s.a. 999. 66 *AU*, s.a. 1001; *AI*, s.a. 1002; *CS*, s.a. 1000; *AFM*, s.a. 1001. The Annals of the Four Masters date Brian's accession to the kingship of Ireland after this event: 'An céad bhliadhain do Bhriain mac Cindéittigh mic Lorcáin ós Erin h'rioghe lxxxi bliadhain a aois an tan sin', 'The first year of Brian, son of Cennétig, son of Lorcán, in sovereignty over Ireland. Seventy-six years was his age at that

the men of Mide marched alongside Brian in various expeditions northwards also in 1002.⁶⁷ He was similarly aligned with the Munster ruler in subsequent attempts by Brian to wield power in Leth Cuinn in the middle years of this decade.⁶⁸

Notwithstanding his apparent dependency on the southern king in this period, in a significant symbolic act Máel Sechnaill is said in various sources to have revived the fair of Tailtiu in 1007.⁶⁹ His association with the church of Clonmacnoise is also underlined in this year by reference to his purchase of an *eneclár* of the great altar there.⁷⁰ Allegiance to Armagh is similarly indicated by an entry for 1013 in the lead-up to the Battle of Clontarf: he attacked the territory of Conaille 'i ndighail saraighti Fhinnfaidhig Phatraicc 7 bristi Bachlai Patraicc', 'in revenge for the profanation of Patrick's Finnfiadech and the breaking of Patrick's staff'. Significantly, however, this action was undertaken at the request of Brian and Máel Muire, abbot of Armagh.⁷¹ An encounter with Ualgarg ua Ciarda, king of Cairpre, and Niall ua Ruairc of Bréifne immediately afterwards suggests independent action: in revenge for the killing of some of his household when drunk, he slew ua Ciarda, perpetrator of that act, and others himself.⁷² Defeats at the hands of Flaithbertach, king of Ailech,⁷³ and a combined Leinster–Viking force at Drinan in the same year⁷⁴ may have caused him to seek Brian's support, as we have seen. When the careers of the two men are viewed in parallel, however, their trajectory is not dissimilar: notwithstanding their very different pedigrees, both are powerful leaders who experience setbacks as well as triumphs – Máel Sechnaill is not consistently subservient to Brian.

THE CLONMACNOISE-GROUP TEXTS

The Clonmacnoise-group texts deliberately portray Máel Sechnaill as superior to his Munster rival, presenting a biased biography of the Mide king. His 'first exploit' (*cetna toisc/feacht*), an expedition to Dublin, is recorded retrospectively in these related compilations,⁷⁵ and *Chronicum Scotorum* notes the beginning of his reign in 980.⁷⁶ The account of the Battle of Tara in the same year is accorded

time' (*AFM*, s.a. 1002). ⁶⁷ *AU*, s.a. 1001; *AI*, s.a. 1002; *AT*, p. 246; *CS*, s.a. 1000; *AFM*, s.a. 1001. ⁶⁸ *AFM*, s.a. 1003; *AI*, s.a. 1006. Brian is also said to have gone through Mide on his way to Armagh when he left gold on the altar there about this time (*CS*, s.a. 1003; *AFM*, s.a. 1004). According to the Annals of the Four Masters he had a further stopover in Mide the following year (*AFM*, s.a. 1005). ⁶⁹ *CS*, s.a. 1005; *AFM*, s.a. 1006; *AU*, s.a. 1006 (but in a later hand); *The metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. and trans. E.J. Gwynn, 5 vols (Dublin, 1903–35), iv, pp 160–1, line 207. ⁷⁰ *CS*, s.a. 1005. A hide was given from each fort in Mide, as the purchase price. ⁷¹ *AU*, s.a. 1012. ⁷² *Ibid.* ⁷³ *Ibid.* ⁷⁴ *Ibid.* ⁷⁵ The texts read *o Ath Cliath*, 'from Dublin', but *co* 'to' must be intended. What he did while in Dublin is variously recorded. According to *Chronicum Scotorum* (s.a. 973), he broke a Viking's foot, while the Annals of Tigernach (p. 230) suggest more realistically that he broke and cut down the wood – Tomar's wood on the outskirts of Dublin presumably being signified. ⁷⁶ *CS*, s.a. 978.

biblical significance: engaging in a siege of Dublin lasting three days and three nights, Máel Sechnaill and his allies are said to have secured the release of *geill Erenn*, ‘the hostages of Ireland’.⁷⁷ This version of events is paralleled in a king-list preserved in the Book of Leinster, *Do fhlaithesaiB Hérend iar creitim* (‘Concerning the rulers of Ireland after the [coming of the] faith’) says: ‘forbais tri laa 7 tri n-aidchi leis for Gallaib co tuc giallu Herend ar écin uadib’, ‘He [Máel Sechnaill] besieged the Vikings for three days and three nights and brought the hostages of Ireland by force from them’.⁷⁸ The Clonmacnoise annalists go further, however, claiming that he and his followers obtained *a noigreir o Gallaib*, ‘their complete demands from Vikings’: ‘xx cét [bó] co setaib 7 mainib, 7 co saíre Húa Ne[i]ll archena o Sinaind [co muir] cen chain’, ‘twenty cows, as well as jewels and treasure, and freedom for Uí Néill from the Shannon to the sea’.⁷⁹ This provides some flesh for the bald, dramatic statement in the Annals of Ulster that ‘foreign power [was ejected] from Ireland as a result’ of the battle.⁸⁰ In the Clonmacnoise-group texts, Máel Sechnaill specifically directs proceedings, proclaiming in *eseirghi airrdirc*, ‘the wonderful resurrection’, whereby Irishmen enslaved by Vikings were delivered from bondage.⁸¹ This, too, is echoed in the Book of Leinster king-list, *escongra airdairc*, ‘a wonderful proclamation’ being placed in Máel Sechnaill’s mouth: ‘Cech oen ar se fil i crich Gall do Gaedelaib i ndaíre 7 i ndochraite táet ass dia thír feisin’, “‘Every Irishman”, he said, “who is in slavery and bondage in Viking territory, let him go to his own land””.⁸² Once again, the annalists place greater emphasis on the significance of the event, since Máel Sechnaill is said to have put an end to the Babylonian captivity of Ireland as a result of his actions: ‘ba sí bruit Babilone na hErenn in bruit sin’, ‘that captivity was the Babylonian captivity of Ireland’.⁸³

Another victory over the Vikings of Dublin gained by Máel Sechnaill almost a decade later is recounted in similar terms. While the death of his half-brother and king of Dublin, Glún Iairn, which precipitated the attack, is widely recorded in 989,⁸⁴ only compilations emanating from Clonmacnoise relate that Máel Sechnaill, presumably no longer restrained by family ties, immediately engaged in battle. His tactics mirror those of the earlier encounter: thus he besieged his opponents for twenty nights (rather than three in the case of the Battle of Tara) ‘connar ibset uisce frissin acht sal’, ‘so that they drank no water save brine’ during that time.⁸⁵ Tribute, too, was a concern on this occasion, Máel Sechnaill

77 *AT*, p. 233; cf. *CS*, s.a. 978. 78 *The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, ed. R.I. Best et al., 6 vols (Dublin, 1954–83), i, p. 98, lines 3140–1. 79 *AT*, p. 233; cf. *CS*, s.a. 978. 80 *AU*, s.a. 979: *nert Gall a hErinn*. 81 *AT*, pp 233–4: ‘dia n-ebairt: Gach aen do Gaedelaib fuil a crich Gall a ndairi 7 docraite tait ass dia tir arcind siddha 7 sochair’, ‘when he said: “Let every one of the Irish who is in the territory of the foreigners in slavery and bondage go to his own land for peace and comfort”’. Cf. *CS*, s.a. 978. 82 *Book of Leinster*, i, p. 98, lines 3142–3. See also *Lebor gabála Erenn: the Book of the taking of Ireland*, ed. and trans. R.A.S. Macalister, 5 vols (Dublin, 1938–56), v, pp 402–3, § 665. 83 *AT*, p. 233; cf. *CS*, s.a. 978. 84 *AI*, s.a. 989; *AU*, s.a. 988. 85 *AT*, p. 238; cf. *CS*, s.a. 987.

securing *uingi d'ór gach garda*, 'an ounce of gold for every enclosure' to be paid every Christmas Eve.⁸⁶

The level of detail contained in these entries, combined with their occasional use of emotive language, sets them and their subject apart. Moreover, they and others like them occur in the midst of more sober recording, detailing different events.⁸⁷ This subjective appraisal of Máel Sechnaill's activities also extends to castigation of his opponents, specifically Brian Bórama. An expedition that the midlands ruler undertook to Connacht in 992 is recorded conservatively in the Annals of Ulster, which note *co tuc gabala mora ass*, 'and he brought away great spoils'.⁸⁸ The Clonmacnoise-group texts add that simultaneously, or after that event, Brian led a hosting into Mide '7 nir gab bai na duine co ndeachaidh ass a coir n-éludha', 'and he captured neither cattle nor people and left like a runaway'.⁸⁹ Not alone was Brian unsuccessful in his attack on Máel Sechnaill when the latter was engaged on a campaign elsewhere, but also his actions are portrayed as underhand, the term *élúd*, 'secret or stealthy departure' encompassing as a legal term the notion of failure to comply with legal customs or duties.⁹⁰ Elsewhere, too, Brian's behaviour with regard to his northern opponent is said to be less than upstanding. A year or so after what is portrayed as their joint expedition to Glenn Máma in 999 in the Clonmacnoise-group texts,⁹¹ Brian is said to have turned treacherously upon Máel Sechnaill (*tre mebail*).⁹² Although the reproving phrase is not present in either *Chronicum Scotorum* or the Annals of the Four Masters, these compilations and the Annals of Tigernach claim (retrospectively) that this was 'Cetimpodh Briain 7 Connacht for Mael Sechlainn Mor', 'the first revolt by Brian and the Connachtmen against Máel Sechnaill Mór',⁹³ implying that this reproachable conduct would continue.

The Annals of Tigernach, which preserve the most partisan account of Máel Sechnaill's rule, are unfortunately lacunose between c.1002 and 1017. Nevertheless, the related chronicles – *Chronicum Scotorum* and the Annals of the Four Masters – record his actions and the latter uniquely accord him an active part in the Battle of Clontarf, as we have seen. The claim therein that he bravely routed Vikings and Leinstermen from the River Tolka to Áth Cliath⁹⁴ is placed between the two lists of those killed in the encounter, following the enumeration of Brian's fallen allies, and preceding the names of his slain opponents. It could

86 *AT*, p. 238; *CS*, s.a. 987. 87 After the reference to Ireland's Babylonian captivity, for example, *Chronicum Scotorum* (s.a. 978) records the death of two ecclesiastics in formulaic terms: 'Murchadh mac Riatai, ab Ruis Comain, et tanaisi Cluana muc Nois, quieuit. Mugron ab Iae, scriba et episcopus, quieuit'. 88 *AU*, s.a. 991. 89 *AT*, p. 239; *CS*, s.a. 990; cf. *AFM*, s.a. 991. 90 E.G. Quin (ed.), *Dictionary of the Irish language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials* (compact ed. Dublin, 1986), E 118.3–32. 91 *AT*, p. 243; *CS*, s.a. 997. *Do Fhlaitheasib Hérend iar Creitim* also depicts it as a joint venture: 'Cath Glinni Mámma la Brian 7 Mael Sechnaill for Gallaib' (*Book of Leinster*, i, p. 98, lines 3145–6). See also *Lebor gabála Erenn*, v, pp 402–3, § 656. 92 *AT*, p. 245. 93 *Ibid.*; *CS*, s.a. 998; *AFM*, s.a. 999. 94 *AFM*, s.a. 1013: 'Ro mheabhaidh iaramh an cath tria neart cathaigthe, 7 crodhachta, 7 iommbuailte

well have been added to a pre-existing account of the battle and the other records of the event, with the exception of *Chronicum Scotorum*,⁹⁵ present the two groups of the dead consecutively, as we would expect. Depicting the Mide ruler as a brave participant in the conflict is in keeping with his positive portrayal elsewhere in the Clonmacnoise-group texts. Nestling among more conventional annalistic entries, therefore, is Máel Sechnaill's literary Life.⁹⁶

When this Life came into existence is difficult to judge. The retrospective nature of many of the entries displaying sympathy with Máel Sechnaill points to the reworking of an existing compilation. In view of the fact that the Mide bias is present (to a greater or lesser extent) in all chronicles of the Clonmacnoise group, it is likely to have been a feature of their common source. Furthermore, its prominence in both the Annals of Tigernach and *Chronicum Scotorum* in particular mitigates against the theory that there were two chronicles in close contact with one another at Clonmacnoise in the twelfth century – one from which *Chronicum Scotorum* derived that was kept by the learned family of Meic Cuinn na mBocht, which displayed a particular attachment to Máel Sechnaill's Southern Uí Néill branch of Clann Cholmáin, and another that was much more sympathetic to Uí Chonchobair, representing the Annals of Tigernach.⁹⁷ As far as the portrayal of Máel Sechnaill is concerned at least, both the Annals of Tigernach and *Chronicum Scotorum*, as well as related chronicles, reveal the same positive tone.

Nicholas Evans has postulated that the Clonmacnoise-group texts represent a conflation of the Chronicle of Ireland preserved first at Clonard and then at Clonmacnoise from 1060 or so with a Clonmacnoise chronicle from which many of the unique entries in the Clonmacnoise-group texts were added after 1060.⁹⁸ While it is likely that this Clonmacnoise chronicle would have presented Mide

ria Maolseachlainn ó Thulcaind co hAth Cliath for Gallaibh ocus Laighnibh', 'The forces were afterwards routed by dint of battling, bravery and striking by Máel Sechnaill from the River Tolka to Áth Cliath against the foreigners and the Leinstermen'. ⁹⁵ The passage in question is also found in part in *Chronicum Scotorum* (s.a. 1012) between the two lists of the dead, but without reference to Máel Sechnaill. Since it is partially illegible, it is unclear whether a reference to Máel Sechnaill formed part of the original account in this chronicle. The legible text reads: 'i. o Tulcaid go Ath Cliath, gur raoinedh for Galloibh ocus for Laignibh, tria nert cathaighthe, et imbualta, et crodachta', 'i.e. from the Tulcadh to Ath-cliaith, and the victory was gained over the foreigners and the Lagenians, through dint of battling, striking and bravery'. Gearóid Mac Niocaill read the illegible portion as *et alii nobiles* in his edition of the text published on CELT at www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G100016/index.html (accessed 18 Oct. 2012). The text continues with the names of the Viking-Leinster dead, as in the Annals of the Four Masters. ⁹⁶ Clare Downham has spoken of 'a "Saga of Mael Sechnaill Mór", which was woven into the Clonmacnoise exemplar' ('Vikings in Southern Uí Néill', 241, n. 63). ⁹⁷ Grabowski and Dumville, *Chronicles and annals*, pp 174–5, 180, 183; A. Kehnel, *Clonmacnois – the church and lands of St Ciarán: change and continuity in an Irish monastic foundation (6th to 16th century)* (Münster, 1997), pp 10–12. ⁹⁸ Evans, *Present and the past*, p. 90, with detailed evidence presented at pp 45–90.

dynasts in a favourable light and thus contemporary records of such events as the Battle of Tara in 980 would have exalted in Máel Sechnaill's victory, the specific nature of this ruler's depiction may suggest that other issues are at play. In particular, the pointed castigation of Brian Bórama, Máel Sechnaill's main opponent, in the Clonmacnoise-group texts makes it tempting to speculate that the depiction of the midlands leader was being revisited in the light of Munster propaganda proclaiming the glorious deeds of their man. Any rewriting of entries undertaken when these chronicles were combined would not have been influenced by *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, since it was written after this time.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the glorification of Brian that reached its apotheosis in the *Cogadh* had commenced some considerable time previously.¹⁰⁰ The narrative was in existence by 1113,¹⁰¹ another year that has been deemed significant in the history of the transmission of the related Clonmacnoise chronicles, since their nature appears to change around this time.¹⁰² Thus, if further elaboration of annalistic material took place as part of this process, it could have taken cognisance of Brian's 'new biography'. That new biography drew on existing sources, including annalistic entries elevating Brian and his older brother Mathgamain.¹⁰³ It is equally likely that this type of source inspired a pro-Mide author (or authors) to counter tendentious southern claims in what may have been a parallel format, a series of entries concerning a specific ruler.

This speculative scenario is built on certain assumptions about the use and influence of annalistic material.¹⁰⁴ What is clear, however, is that augmented accounts of kings' deeds came to be expressed in an annalistic framework from the eleventh century, as the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland extolling the ninth-century Osraige ruler, Cerball mac Dúnlainge, attest.¹⁰⁵ The first part of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, which is based on a series of annal entries, is also composed in this mould.¹⁰⁶ When taken together, often emotional and detailed entries concerning Máel Sechnaill in the Clonmacnoise-group texts are in outline comparable with these more developed propaganda narratives. It is not difficult to imagine the portrait of Máel Sechnaill sketched in the Clonmacnoise-group texts forming the basis of a more sustained description of his activities of the kind that survives concerning Brian. In sum, therefore, it seems likely that the depiction of Máel Sechnaill in the Clonmacnoise-group texts represents a

99 M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The date of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*', *Peritia*, 9 (1995), 354–77; D. Ó Corráin, 'Viking Ireland: afterthoughts' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 449–50. 100 The account of the Battle of Clontarf in the Annals of Ulster (s.a. 1014) already shows evidence of having been embellished in favour of Brian (Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru*, pp 55–6). 101 I have argued that it was composed in the decade between 1103 and 1113 ('Date of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*'). 102 Grabowski and Dumville, *Chronicles and annals*, pp 175, 182–6, with arguments presented in particular in ch. III. 103 M. Ní Mhaonaigh, '*Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* and the annals: a comparison', *Ériu*, 47 (1996), 101–36. 104 For brief discussion of this topic, see Evans, *Present and the past*, pp 227–8. 105 For example, *FA*, pp 102–3, no. 260; 108–9, no. 277. 106 CGG, pp 1–39.

reworking of earlier entries concerning him, inspired in part by accounts of deeds of his contemporaries, most notably Brian.¹⁰⁷ This reworking may have been undertaken between 1060 and 1113, two dates that have been deemed of significance for the evolution of the Clonmacnoise-group texts on other grounds.

Particular concern with Máel Sechnaill in these related chronicles is also attested in the entries dealing with events after Brian's death in 1014. A greater amount of information on his activities is preserved in the Clonmacnoise texts than in other compilations. The Annals of Ulster, for example, relate that in 1015 Flaithbertach ua Néill assisted the Mide ruler, who undertook a hosting to Leinster in that year.¹⁰⁸ The events of this time are recorded in much greater detail in *Chronicum Scotorum* and the Annals of the Four Masters, which present Máel Sechnaill making triumphant expeditions to Dublin and to Leinster in turn.¹⁰⁹ Yet they omit (perhaps deliberately) reference to an attack by Brian Bórama's son, Donnchad, on Mide the following year.¹¹⁰ The two men are depicted as cooperating a few years later when they marched to the Shannon, together with Flaithbertach ua Néill and Art ua Ruairc. That Máel Sechnaill was in charge is signalled by the fact that the Connacht hostages acquired on this occasion were given to him.¹¹¹ Only the Annals of Tigernach and the Annals of the Four Masters preserve notice of this event. These two chronicles also note attacks by him on Vikings and Cenél nÉogain around this time¹¹² and the Annals of the Four Masters record both the death of his wife, Máel Muire daughter of Amlaíb, and that of his chief steward, Mac Conaillig.¹¹³

Máel Sechnaill himself died shortly afterwards in 1022 and his obituary appears in all compilations.¹¹⁴ Hailed in formulaic terms as 'airdri Eirenn, tuir ordain 7 oireachais iarthair domain', 'over-king of Ireland, pillar of the dignity and nobility of the western world' in the Annals of Ulster and other chronicles,¹¹⁵ he is seen off on his heavenly journey by no less than the successors of three venerable saints – Patrick, Columba and Ciarán according to *Chronicum Scotorum* – mention of the latter underlining a desired link with Clonmacnoise.¹¹⁶ Both the Clonmacnoise compilations and the Annals of Ulster assign him a long reign of forty-two years, dating it from the time of his initial accession in 980 or so.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁷ In this connection, it is noteworthy that birth dates for both Brian and his great-grandson, Muirchertach, for whom *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* was composed, were inserted retrospectively in *CS*, s.a. 923, 1048; *AT*, p. 282 (Grabowski and Dumville, *Chronicles and annals*, p. 175). ¹⁰⁸ *AU*, s.a. 1015. ¹⁰⁹ *AFM*, s.a. 1014; *CS*, s.a. 1013. ¹¹⁰ *AI*, s.a. 1016. ¹¹¹ *AT*, p. 250; *AFM*, s.a. 1019. ¹¹² *AT*, p. 251; *AFM*, s.a. 1021. ¹¹³ *AFM*, s.a. 1021. ¹¹⁴ A short note appears in the Annals of Inisfallen (s.a. 1022): 'Bás Mail Shechnaill meicc Domnaill, rí Temrach', 'Death of Máel Sechnaill son of Domnall, king of Temuir'. ¹¹⁵ *AU*, s.a. 1022; *AT*, p. 252; *CS*, s.a. 1020; *AFM*, s.a. 1022. Brian Bórama's great-grandson, Muirchertach, is also described as *tuir ordain 7 airechais iarthair in domain*, 'tower of the honour and dignity of the western world' on his death almost a century later (*AU*, s.a. 1119). ¹¹⁶ *CS*, s.a. 1020. According to the Prophecy of Berchán, he will die *a tigh Ciarán*, 'in the house of Ciarán' (*Prophecy of Berchán: Irish and Scottish high-kings of the early Middle Ages*, ed. and trans. B.T. Hudson (Westport, CT, and London, 1996), pp 33, 79, stanza 72). ¹¹⁷ *AU*, s.a. 1022: 'Mael

This ignores the period of Brian's supremacy for the decade or more leading up to his own death in 1014, notwithstanding a reference in *Chronicum Scotorum* in 1001 to the beginning of Brian's reign (*Brían regnare incipit*).¹¹⁸ Synchronisms of kings, on the other hand, chronicle his rule in two phases, interrupted by Brian's period in power.¹¹⁹ This is also how eleventh-century historians such as Flann Mainistrech mac Echthigern (d. 1056) and Gilla Cóemáin mac Gilla Shamthainne (fl. 1072) depict his reign.¹²⁰

POETIC ACCOUNTS OF MÁEL SECHNAILL'S CAREER¹²¹

A chronologically divided rule is also accorded him in the Middle Irish metrical account of Gaelic kings, the Prophecy of Berchán, twenty-three years *i n-airdri na hÉirend*, 'in the high-kingship of Ireland' before Brian's time, followed by nine years after the death of the Munster king.¹²² His rule is extolled conventionally in that source: as the rightful king, 'Bídh aibind bith fri rígi/for Éirind co n-ardmíni', 'it will be delightful to live during his gentle kingship of Ireland'.¹²³ His territory will decline after his death.¹²⁴ As *crádh Gall*, 'the torment of the Vikings', his actions continually benefit the Irish (*ic les Gáedel*),¹²⁵ though of his deeds only *tromcath mór mullaigh Temrach*, 'the great, powerful battle of the Hill of Tara', fought at the beginning of his rule in 980, receives specific mention.¹²⁶

Sechlainn ... do ecaib isin tres bliadain .xl. regni sui', 'Máel Sechnaill ... died in the forty-third year of his reign'. Cf. *AT*, p. 252; *CS*, s.a. 1020. 118 *CS*, s.a. 999. 119 *Book of Leinster*, i, p. 98, lines 3139–50: 'Mael Sechnaill mac Domnaill .xxiii. ... Brian mac Cennétig .xii. ... Mael Sechnaill mac Domnaill i rrige Herend doridisi co n-erbailt i Croinis Locha Annind', 'Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill twenty-three [years] ... Brian mac Cennétig twelve [years] ... Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill in the kingship of Ireland again until he died in Cró Inis on Lough Ennell'. 120 See, for example, Flann Mainistrech's poem *Ríg Themra Tóebaige iar tain in Book of Leinster*, iii, pp 514–15, lines 15,958–77 and Gilla Cóemáin's poem *Atá sund forba fessa in Three historical poems ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin: a critical edition of the work of an eleventh-century Irish scholar*, ed. and trans. P. Smith (Münster, 2007), pp 180–1, stanzas 19, 20, 20A. 121 Clodagh Downey has undertaken a detailed analysis of the poetic material concerned with Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, presenting a lecture on the topic entitled 'Corop suthain ar n-ardri – the poetic life and afterlife of Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill', at the International Celtic Congress in Bonn, July 2007. I am very grateful to her for commenting on a draft of this essay and for providing me with a copy of the handout to her lecture. 122 *Prophecy of Berchán*, pp 32, 33, 78, 79, stanzas 66, 72. 123 *Ibid.*, pp 32, 78, stanza 64 (my trans.). 124 *Ibid.*, pp 33–4, 79, stanzas, 73, 73a (my trans.): 'Bídh olc bias Ériu de/ fírfother mo thairngire/ ó sin go laithi in brátha/ meassu cách gach áentrátha. Ní bía cell ná cathair cáidh/ ní bía dúnadh ná ríghráith/ fíodhglas ná magh ná maitheis/ gan dul uile a n-anflaitheis', 'Ireland will be unfortunate as a result of it [Máel Sechnaill's death], my prophecy will be fulfilled; from then until the day of judgement, everyone will be worse off all the time. There will not be a church or holy place, a fortress or royal palace, a green wood, a plain or possessions, that will not degenerate into tyranny'. 125 *Ibid.*, pp 32, 78, stanza 64. 126 *Ibid.*, stanza 63.

The Battle of Tara is similarly celebrated in other poetic accounts of his career. Indeed, according to an elegy put into the mouth of the otherwise unknown poet, Flann Ua Rónáin, he was made king as a result of his leadership in this encounter.¹²⁷ In this poem also, details pertaining to the battle are few, Flann *na marb* ('of the dead' or 'of the elegies'), as he is alternatively titled, being more concerned with providing a general portrait of the ideal king who appears to have been his patron.¹²⁸ Nuts fall from the branch as a result of his death and his kinsmen, *caim clainne Néill*, 'the fair ones of the race of Niall', do not rise, presumably for grief.¹²⁹ He towers over them in every respect: 'Bec cach nós co Niall a-nunn', 'Back to Niall [Noígiallach] every custom compares ill with his';¹³⁰ every king is insignificant compared with him; his land is more important than any other territory.¹³¹ Its key places are alliteratively enumerated, a gift from God, heaven's angels bestowed on him power.¹³² Fittingly, therefore, his death on a Sunday brought him a step closer to God whose grace he had received.¹³³ That his death was on Sunday, 2 September, is recorded in the Annals of Ulster and the poem is alleged to have been written on that day.¹³⁴ While this is unlikely, it could well have been composed not long after Máel Sechnaill's passing by a professional poet associated with him.¹³⁵ If so, his first significant military outing at Tara was considered by contemporaries to have been a high point of his career and his victory against Vikings there continued to be celebrated by later authors. 'Berchán' noted this battle *for slúagh Danmarg*, 'against a Danish host', as mentioned already,¹³⁶

127 J. Carney, 'The Ó Cianáin miscellany', *Ériu*, 21 (1969), 144, 146, stanza 4: 'Cath Temra tucsatar Gaill;/ at-eth teglach bregda binn:/ Gáidil fá Mael Sechnaill seng;/ rígaít ann in ngelchruinn ngrinn', 'The foreigners gave battle at Tara. A fine musical household went to the attack; the Irish under slender Máel Sechnaill make the merry bright well-made man king on the spot'. 128 See in particular, *ibid.*, pp 145, 146, stanza 12; 146, n. 2. 129 *Ibid.*, pp 143, 145, stanza 1. 130 *Ibid.*, pp 144, 146, stanza 6. 131 *Ibid.*, stanza 7: 'Bec cach tír co tír finn Fuait;/ bec linn cach rí acht rí a róit;/ bec cach linn co Linn finn Féicc;/ bec cach bréit co Brug Meicc Óicc', 'Every land is insignificant compared with the fair land of Fuat; every king we think insignificant except the king of its highway; every pool is insignificant compared with the fair pool of Fiacc; every strip of land is insignificant compared with Brug Meicc Óic [Newgrange]'. 132 *Ibid.*, pp 144–6, stanzas 8–9: 'Tucsat aingil nime nert;/ Loch Ainninn, Bile, Bóinn bail;/ Cnogba, Cerna, Codal, Colt;/ forad torc Temra, teg nAirt. Uisnech, Ailech, Emain úair;/ Tlachtga, Temair thúaid re a táeb;/ Cloithrén, cnoc ríge Colla coir;/ Craeb Dromma Móir arin Máel', 'The angels of heaven gave the devotee [Máel] power: Loch Ennell, Bile, the fine Boyne, Knowth, Cerna, Codal, Colt, seat of the heroes [boars] of Tara, the house of Art, Uisnech, Ailech, cold Emain, Tlachtga, Tara beside it to the north, Cloithrén, the hill of the kings descended from the just Colla, Craeb Dromma Móir'. 133 *Ibid.*, pp 145–6, stanza 11: 'Ruc céim i nDomnach co Día/ co coblach Ó Néill a-nú/ at-bath ar rót bethad cé;/ fo-fúair rath Dé mar as dú', 'Today, Sunday, he has taken a step towards God, towards the company of the descendants of Niall. He died on the highway of this world; he got God's grace, as is fitting'. 134 *Ibid.*, p. 142. 135 Carney does not discount the possibility that it was in fact 'a lament composed immediately after the death of the king' (*ibid.*, p. 143). Edel Bhreathnach follows Carney in dating the poem to the early eleventh century (*Tara: a select bibliography* (Dublin, 1995), p. 105, no. 176). 136 *Prophecy*

and what may be a Middle Irish eulogy of him, *Maoil Sechloinn sinser Gaoidhel*, 'Máel Sechnaill, ancestor of the Irish', notes his slaying of *rí Lochlann na long sotla*, 'the king of *Lochlann* of the proud ships' in the encounter.¹³⁷

The battle is also alluded to in the eleventh-century text, *Baile in scáil*, 'The phantom's frenzy', it being prophesied that *mórdrech dúr*, 'a resolute, broad-faced one' [Máel Sechnaill] *dechrass ar thuru Temrach*, 'will become furious with anger before the hosts of Tara'.¹³⁸ Among the other encounters listed – *cath fri Cláire*, 'a battle against Cláire'; *cath Iroiss*, 'the Battle of Iross'; *cath Moistin*, 'the Battle of Maistiu' – one is glossed *cath Cairn Fordroma* that Máel Sechnaill waged against Tuadmumu in 990.¹³⁹ In this work, too, his death is said to have occurred on a Sunday; its cause, *marb di óul meda*, 'dead from a drink of mead', is not corroborated elsewhere and his demise is alleged to have happened in Telchinn¹⁴⁰ rather than in Cró Inis as noted in most sources.¹⁴¹ As in the other poems, however, Máel Sechnaill's portrayal is stereotypical here. A reference to him as *fessach Cúaland*, 'the knowledgeable one of Cualu'¹⁴² may resonate with the description of him as a wise ancestor figure in Flann na marb's elegy,¹⁴³ yet in both cases we are dealing with literary tropes. His depiction as *graiphnech Crúachan*, 'horseman of Crúachu' is similarly echoed in a metrical composition on the kings of Mide, *Mide maigen clainni Cuind*, ascribed in some manuscripts to the eleventh-century historian Flann Mainistrech, in which Máel Sechnaill is linked with a great steed.¹⁴⁴ An association between his horsemanship and battle

of *Berchán*, pp 32, 78, stanza 63. See also n. 126 above. ¹³⁷ J.G. O'Keeffe, 'On Mael Shechlainn, king of Ireland, †1022, and his contemporaries' in J. Fraser et al. (eds), *Irish texts. Fasc. 4–5* (London, 1934), p. 31, stanza 6. For a brief account of this poem, see also Bhreathnach, *Tara*, p. 105, no. 177. O'Keeffe edits the poem from Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 5057–9. It is also preserved in the Book of Uí Maine. ¹³⁸ *Baile in scáil*, 'The phantom's frenzy', ed. and trans. K. Murray (Dublin, 2004), pp 47, line 413; 65, § 57. ¹³⁹ *AU*, s.a. 989. Oxford, Bodleian MS Rawlinson B512 reads: 'firfid cath fri cláriu cath iroiss .i. cath cairn fordroma' (*Baile in scáil*, p. 47, n. 109), which Murray takes to be a misplaced gloss on the Battle of Cláire (*ibid.*, p. 99). ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 47, lines 417–18; 65, § 57: 'Marb di óul meda. Crúas iar ngail, domnach hi Teilchinaib', 'Dead from a drink of mead. Bravery after valour, on a Sunday in Telchinn'. The discontinuity of his rule is also noted in this source: '.xxx.ui. bliadnai namá – hi rígi huli da-méla (.i. ruc Brián ó .xx. himach rígi nÉrend)', 'thirty-six years only he will spend in complete sovereignty (i.e. Brian obtained the kingship of Ireland from the twentieth [year] onwards)' (*ibid.*, pp 47, lines 419–20; 66, § 57). ¹⁴¹ See, for example, *CS*, s.a. 1020. ¹⁴² *Baile in scáil*, pp 47, line 414; 65, § 57. ¹⁴³ Carney, 'Ó Cianáin miscellany', 144, 146, stanza 6: *bec bhós cach ciall acht a chlann*, 'the wisdom of all others compares ill with that of those descended from him'. ¹⁴⁴ P. Smith (ed. and trans.), 'Mide maigen Clainne Cuind: a medieval poem on the kings of Mide', *Peritia*, 15 (2001), 120, 132, stanza 46, where he is described as Máel Sechnaill *echmóir*, 'of the great steed'. According to the Annals of Ulster, he fell from his horse in 1004 *corbo crolighi báis dó*, 'so that he lay mortally ill' (*AU*, s.a. 1003). His association with horses is also noted in a later poem (K. Meyer, 'Zwiesgespräch zwischen Mac Liag und Irard Mac Coisse', *ZCP*, 8 (1912), 220, stanzas 25–33), for which reference I am grateful to Clodagh Downey. She has also drawn my attention to the version of Máel Sechnaill's encounter with the poet, Mac Coisse, preserved

is implied by his description as *sriangalach*, 'bridle-brave' in another metrical composition, *Éri ógh inis na náem*, attributed to the twelfth-century poet, Gilla Modutu ua Casaide.¹⁴⁵ His military credentials are underlined elsewhere in the same poem by his portrayal with spears¹⁴⁶ and as *adalltrach uallach Uisnigh*, 'the proud raper/usurper of Uisnech'.¹⁴⁷ The Middle Irish eulogy addressing him as *Maoil Sechlóinn sinser Gaoidhel*, 'Máel Sechnaill, ancestor of the Irish', mentioned above, similarly depicts him as *milidh mor fionn foirniata*, 'a great, fair, warlike soldier', and as *leómhan fial*, 'a generous lion'.¹⁴⁸ Máel Sechnaill is thus being praised as a military hero, as befits a rightful king, mention being made elsewhere of his twenty-five victories in combat, twenty against Irishmen and five against Vikings.¹⁴⁹ Appropriately, he could also be mild and just, and he is lauded for his *millse*, 'sweetness', in *Mide maigen clainni Cuind*.¹⁵⁰ Most important, as far as the poets were concerned, was his generosity and this trait features prominently in the celebratory verses that form an integral part of his death-notice in the Clonmacnoise-group texts.¹⁵¹

in the seventeenth-century compilation, the Annals of Clonmacnoise, in which the ruler of Mide challenges Mac Coisse to fight on horseback. The reason given for the stipulation is that Máel Sechnaill 'was computed to be the best horseman generally in those partes of Europe, for king Moyleseachlins delight was to ride a horse that was never broken, handled or ridden until the age of 7 years, which hee could so exactly ride as any other man could ride an old tame and gentle horse' (*AClon.*, pp 161–2). For the relationship between Mac Coisse and Máel Sechnaill as depicted in later literature, see C. Ó Lochlainn, 'Poets on the Battle of Clontarf I', *Éigse*, 3 (1941–2), 208–18. 145 *Lebor gabála Erenn*, v, p. 540, stanza 4. The adjective could also allude to his valourous restraint, if *srian* is taken in its figurative meaning as 'check, control' (Quin, *Dictionary*, S 374.72). In view of the other military references in the same poem, however, this is less likely. 146 *Lebor gabála Erenn*, v, pp 552–3, stanza 50: *Máel-Sechlainn ... na sleg*, 'Máel Sechnaill ... of the spears'. 147 *Ibid.*, pp 554–5, stanza 53. 148 O'Keeffe, 'On Mael Shechlainn', p. 30, stanza 2. 149 *Lebor gabála Erenn*, v, pp 538–9, lines 4550–3. Reference to these twenty-five victories forms part of *Do Fhlaitheasaib Hérend iar Creitím* in *Book of Leinster*, i, p. 98, lines 3150–1: *Côic catha fichet ro mebdatar re Máel Sechlainn*, 'Twenty-five battles that were won by Máel Sechnaill'. Twenty-three specific battles are enumerated in the version of this text preserved in Rawlinson B512, including the Battle of Fordroma, the Battle of Tara and two battles at Áth Cliath, one of which could conceivably be the Battle of Clontarf (*Lebor gabála Erenn*, v, pp 404–5, § 657). The eulogy of him and his contemporaries, *Maoil Sechlóinn sinser Gaoidhel*, attributes ten battles against Vikings to him and twenty against Irishmen (O'Keeffe, 'On Mael Shechlainn', p. 30, stanzas 4–5). 150 Smith, 'Mide maigen Clainne Cuind', 120, 132, stanza 46: 'rí mór Mide co milli/ éc at-bath 'sin Chró Innse', 'the great king of Mide with sweetness, he died at Cró Inis'. 151 Two stanzas are preserved in the Annals of Tigernach, the Annals of the Four Masters and *Chronicum Scotorum*, one of which is also preserved in a variant version in the Annals of Ulster. The second stanza found in the latter compilation is unique to that text. The two stanzas in the Annals of Ulster, however, were added interlinearly by a later hand (s.a. 1022). The Annals of Loch Cé contain an obituary similar to that in the uninterpolated Annals of Ulster, without the quatrains of verse. Clodagh Downey has drawn to my attention that Máel Sechnaill's lack of generosity is also noted in a later poem (Meyer, 'Zwiegespräch').

MÁEL SECHNAILL AND CÚÁN UA LOTHCHÁIN

This generosity extends to Máel Sechnaill's dynasty according to Cúán ua Lothcháin, the poet most closely connected with the Mide ruler.¹⁵² Murdered in mysterious circumstances two years after Máel Sechnaill's own death,¹⁵³ much of the work attributed to him forms part of the Middle Irish collection, *Dindshenchas Érenn* ('The lore of Ireland's notable places'),¹⁵⁴ and it is in this context that references to his Ua Néill patron must be read. In depicting the landscape of supreme kingship, symbolized most powerfully by the sites of Tara and Tailtiu, Cúán created for Máel Sechnaill a natural space therein. In *Temair, Tailltiu, tír n-óenaig*, 'Tara, Tailtiu, land of assembly' he is portrayed as the rightful heir *focheird síth ima sen-mag* who 'spreads peace about the ancient plain'; he should undoubtedly be *i rígiu Temrach*, 'in the kingship of Tara'. Furthermore, his dynasty should occupy it thereafter (*narab díbdad i Temair*, 'may it [his line] never be extinct in Tara').¹⁵⁵

In the same way, Cúán's elaborate account of the history of *Óenach Tailten*, 'The fair of Tailtiu', *prim-óenach hÉrend áine*, 'the chief fair of noble Erin',¹⁵⁶ and sanctioned by Patrick,¹⁵⁷ casts Máel Sechnaill as a royal hero: 'tuc óenach Taltén a feór/ciarb atharda, rop aneól', 'he raised the fair of Tailtiu from the sod; though of ancestral use, it was unknown'.¹⁵⁸ Written to commemorate the revival of the assembly by Máel Sechnaill in 1007 after a period of almost eighty years, the poem provided the ambitious king with a document to bolster his authority.¹⁵⁹ Notwithstanding the king's significant successes to date, he thinks them insufficient, according to the poet, *conontuc d'óenuch Thaltén*, 'till he has

¹⁵² *Metrical Dindshenchas*, i, p. 41, line 79: *A chland fri soichle sirblad*, 'his line, ever famed for hospitality'. For an account of Cúán's career, see C. Downey, 'The life and work of Cúán ua Lothcháin', *Ríocht na Midhe*, 19 (2008), 55–78. ¹⁵³ *AU*, s.a. 1024; *AI*, s.a. 1024. ¹⁵⁴ Tomás Ó Concheanainn was of the opinion that he was the compiler of the main version (Recension C) of the *Dindshenchas* ('A pious redactor of *Dindshenchas Érenn*', *Ériu*, 33 (1982), 98). In a careful analysis of the manuscript tradition of two poems in particular attributed to Cúán, Clodagh Downey has shown that he cannot have been both the author of these and the compiler of Recension C ('Cúán ua Lothcháin and the transmission of the *Dindshenchas*' in A. Ó Corráin and G. Ó Riain (eds), *Celebrating sixty years of Celtic studies at Uppsala University: proceedings of the Eleventh Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Uppsala, 2013), pp 45–61. I am indebted to Dr Downey for providing me with a pre-publication copy of this article. ¹⁵⁵ *Metrical Dindshenchas*, i, pp 42–5, lines 65–80; Downey, 'Life and work', 60–1. ¹⁵⁶ *Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, pp 150–1, line 48. ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 156–9. ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 160–1, lines 207–8. ¹⁵⁹ Máel Sechnaill's convening of the fair is recorded in some Clonmacnoise-group texts (*CS*, s.a. 1005; *AFM*, s.a. 1006). It was added to the Annals of Ulster in a different hand (*AU*, s.a. 1006). Cúán himself alludes to its long absence: 'Cethri fichit, is fir sain, / do bliadnaib acht óen bliadain / taichniud Tailten', 'Four score years (this is true) all but one year, Tailtiu lay deserted' (*Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, pp 100–1, lines 188–90). This is corroborated in the Annals of Ulster, which refer to *coscradh nOenaigh*, 'a disturbance of the fair [of Tailtiu]' in 927 (*AU*, s.a. 926). The poem's connection with the holding of the fair was noted by Gwynn (*Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, p. 413). See also Downey, 'Life and work', 64.

brought us to the fair of Tailtiu'.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, this is but one stage of his grand design, desiring further *co nantartad hi tech nDé*, 'that he should bring us into the house of God'.¹⁶¹

Cúán's references to Máel Sechnaill have contemporary relevance, therefore, and deliberately cultivate an image of a supremely successful king. Opponents of his rule are noted: in the case of the poem on Tailtiu, kings who did not attend the fair are said to include Flaithbertach ua Néill, king of Ailech, as well as the king of Connacht, Cathal mac Conchobair. According to the poet, however, *ní dlegat ar n-ímgabail*, 'they ought not to shun us', the verb *dligid* perhaps implying that there was a legal obligation on them to attend.¹⁶² Enmity with his royal predecessor, Domnall ua Néill, and a specific incident in which Máel Sechnaill was opposed by Uí Dubáin from Druim Dairbrech in Leinster are referred to in another *dindshenchas* poem attributed to Cúán, *Druim Criaich, cete cét cúan*, 'Druim Criaich, meeting-place of a hundred bands'.¹⁶³ The Mide king triumphs, despite his opponents' underhand methods, not least because of his powerful ancestry going back to Echaid Feidlech, whose deeds are recounted in the first part of the poem.¹⁶⁴ Máel Sechnaill's position as Echaid's natural successor is thereby underlined.¹⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

Various figures from the past are celebrated in other works ascribed to Cúán, including Niall Noígíallach, the eponymous ancestor of Máel Sechnaill's dynasty of Uí Néill.¹⁶⁶ Such is the concern with the sovereignty of this group in the extant material that this poet is read first and foremost as political propagandist for Uí Néill. Furthermore, the preoccupation with rights and entitlement present in the literature is explained with reference to a downturn in northern fortunes, seen most clearly in the rise to power of a southern ruler, Máel Sechnaill's contemporary, Brian Bórama.¹⁶⁷ Unlike his northern counterpart, the Munster king was not part of an established political lineage. Nonetheless, in

¹⁶⁰ *Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, pp 160–1, line 220. The attribution of authorship to Cúán is discussed in Downey, 'Cúán ua Lothcháin'. ¹⁶¹ *Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, pp 162–3, line 223. ¹⁶² *Ibid.*, line 229; Quin, *Dictionary*, D 162.65. ¹⁶³ *Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, pp 52–3, lines 137–40, 149–52. Downey also discusses the attribution of this poem to Cúán in 'Cúán ua Lothcháin'. ¹⁶⁴ *Metrical Dindshenchas*, iv, pp 54–5, lines 170–1: 'uair is do shíl Echach uill/ do Maelsechnaill mac Domnuill', 'since Máel Sechnaill mac Domnall is of the seed of great Eochaid'. For discussion of these events, see *ibid.*, p. 387; Downey, 'Life and work', 66–7; E. Bhreathnach, 'Tales of Connacht: *Cath Airtig*, *Táin Bó Flidhais*, *Cath Leitreach Ruibhe* and *Cath Cumair*', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 45 (2003), 37. ¹⁶⁵ For a discussion of the implication of the poem, see Downey, 'Life and work', 65–6. ¹⁶⁶ *Temair Breg, baile na fian*, 'Tara of Brega, home of the warrior bands' describes how Niall acquired the kingship of Tara, overcoming a series of obstacles, since he was the rightful ruler (M. Joynt (ed. and trans.), 'Echtra mac Echdach Mugmedóin', *Ériu*, 4 (1908), 91–111). ¹⁶⁷ See, for

terms of personal ability, he was at least Máel Sechnaill's match. An examination of the careers of both men as depicted in contemporary annalistic sources reveals comparable paths and, while king-lists suggest that Brian displaced his midlands counterpart, they acknowledge Máel Sechnaill's return to pre-eminence after his rival's death. Moreover, this order was established by eleventh-century historians after the Mide ruler had also died. Contemporaries close to the two leaders may have perceived the situation differently.

Whatever the historical reality, commentators of the day undoubtedly wrote with their own subjective slant. Cúán's bias towards Máel Sechnaill is obvious, as might be expected if, as seems likely, he was in the king's employ. Prejudice is also detectible in annalistic compilations, as we have seen. As Brian's deeds are recounted in greater detail in the Munster collection, the Annals of Inisfallen, so too is there a fuller record of Máel Sechnaill's career in the interlinked annals connected with Clonmacnoise. Significantly, however, the latter texts do not simply preserve more detailed information on the affairs of the Mide king; they provide an approving appraisal of their subject as well. In so doing, they castigate his rivals, in particular the most obdurate of them all, Brian. Some of the comments in question were retrospective, as noted above, yet the tensions of the day between the two rulers could well have informed the general tenor of the Clonmacnoise account. Indeed, were it to have been largely the product of a later period, it is likely that Máel Sechnaill's role would have been expanded further, as that of Cerball mac Dúnlainge is exaggerated in the non-contemporary account of his life preserved in the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland.¹⁶⁸ Brian's own later bombastic biography, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, is also very different in this regard.

If annalists favouring Máel Sechnaill cast occasional aspersions on Brian, the latter's propagandist, writing almost a century later, is far more critical of the Munster king's contemporary. He depicts the Mide ruler as subservient to their man at all times. In the creation of Brian's all-gleaming image, no one could be allowed to place him even momentarily in the shade. History could be adjusted to demote a co-leader or the like; space was cleared to ensure that Brian towered above both occasional friend and foe. That Brian was made to triumph over a traitor in his final battle at Clontarf increased his stature and Máel Sechnaill, who appears to have played no part in the encounter, was perfect for the role.

This aspect of his alleged involvement in the conflict was cultivated further by a Bréifne author who revised the *Cogadh* about the middle of the twelfth century, informed by the ambition of his Ua Ruairc master to control Mide affairs. The image of Máel Sechnaill as two-faced became more focused and it was delineated further by later writers who elaborated the Clontarf story, as Ní Úrdaíl has shown.¹⁶⁹ It was but one of two faces of Máel Sechnaill visible in

example, Bhreathnach, *Tara*, pp 67, 97. ¹⁶⁸ See above, n. 105. ¹⁶⁹ *Cath Cluana Tarbh*. For other later literature on the two rulers, see Ó Lochlainn, 'Poets on the Battle of Clontarf';

Middle Irish sources and Uí Néill writers portray him consistently as an ideal king. That their message has been obscured in the intervening centuries owes much to the continued success of Uí Briain propagandists in belittling the contemporaries of their hero Brian. In the case of Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, this has ensured that a man of two faces has become two-faced.

King Sitriuc Silkenbeard: a great survivor

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The fortunes and misfortunes of war may enhance or destroy the reputations of men, or even both; witness Napoleon. Though he died in the course of the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, Brian Bórama's reputation was undoubtedly enhanced. Towards the end of a military engagement of titanic proportions, he was cut down ruthlessly by a reputedly brutish apostate from the Isle of Man.¹ Brian, king of the Irish, could be seen and presented as a Christian martyr sacrificed on the day of the cruel death of the king of the Jews almost a millennium earlier. The year 1000 had come and gone, the king of Munster (as he still was) having celebrated its first few days as a successful warlord plundering and burning Dublin. Consciousness of a new millennium may or may not have been present in Ireland as it was in parts of continental Europe,² but it can be argued that the defeat of a Dublin-based army at Glenn Máma and the capture of its main stronghold fired up the Munster king's ambition to become the overlord of all of Ireland. If a youthful German king could lord it over much of central Europe as *imperator Romanorum*, so might a seasoned and hitherto successful warrior seek to become *imperator Scotorum*, 'emperor of the Irish'. This he would claim to be five years later, according to a well-known inscription in the Book of Armagh.³ In practice it took several more years until, with the support of Dublin-based armies, Brian had achieved his ultimate ambition. By 1011 he was the universally recognized high-king of Ireland, yet only two years later he found himself in the position of many of his successors – high-king with opposition. And that opposition would soon overwhelm both him and his preferred heir: in a manner of speaking, the Dubliners had won by freeing themselves from oppressive Munster overlordship.

When assessing the consequences of the Battle of Clontarf, it is essential to distinguish the military from the political. Irish sources are generally agreed that the Munstermen held the field of battle; presumably they could collect the spoils of war in the form of discarded weaponry and protective clothing. But their king and his field-commander had both been killed. It was left to Donnchad, Brian's

¹ For recent accounts of the course of the battle, see D. McGettigan, *The Battle of Clontarf, Good Friday, 1014* (Dublin, 2013), pp 87–119; S. Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013), pp 167–238; S. Duffy, 'What happened at the Battle of Clontarf?', *History Ireland*, 22:2 (2014), 30–3. ² G. Duby, *L'an mil* (Paris, 1967); H. Focillon, *The year 1000*, trans. F.D. Wieck (New York, 1969). ³ D. Casey and B. Meehan, 'Brian Boru and the Book of Armagh', *History Ireland*, 22:2 (2014), 28–9.

son by Gormlaith, to lead his depleted forces home and to commence a reign as king of Munster that would be fraught with difficulties. Neither there nor still less in Ireland as a whole had his father inherited or created an administrative apparatus approaching that available to kings of late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Danish England, with its shires and sheriffs, its hundreds and wapentakes, with control of the mintage of coins in huge numbers and with the regulation of society by the issuance of law-codes in their own name. Qualitative differences between Ireland and England show up in the degree and nature of urbanization. The fourth law-code of King Æthelred II, dating from *c.* 1000, 'bespeaks a world of towns (*porti, portus*) and town-reeves (*portirevae*), of traders (*mercatores*) and business (*negotiatio*), of moneyers (*monetarii*) and their employees (*suboperarii*).'⁴ Ireland, like Scotland and Wales, was still a land with a minimum trend towards urbanization. If Brian Bórama did bring a degree of unity to Ireland, he had no means of maintaining control other than military ones. Irish kingship was still embedded in its warlord phase, from which it would begin to make significant advances in the twelfth century before the arrival of the new foreigners. The concept of Brian Bórama as the father of Irish unification is largely wishful thinking. His world view was scarcely more sophisticated than that of Fínnachta Fledach mac Dúnoch, a late seventh-century king of Tara: 'Any king with ambitions to proclaim himself king of Tara in 677 needed to have dealt with his own closely related dynasties, as well as with the emerging Northern Uí Néill dynasties, and the kings of the Laigin and Ulaid, all of which coveted the kingship themselves'.⁵ Only Dublin made a difference.

Even in purely military terms, the Munstermen had failed both before and after the Battle of Clontarf if their principal objective was to recover control of Dublin. Their failure in the autumn and early winter of 1013 is something of a mystery. After all, Meathmen under Máel Sechnaill II's command had compelled surrender following a siege of just under three weeks back in 989.⁶ One possible explanation is that, in view of the destruction occasioned at the beginning of the year 1000, Dublin's defences had been strengthened significantly. Indeed Bank 3 at Wood Quay has been dated on archaeological grounds to *c.* 1000;⁷ it may therefore represent a more effective military obstacle, built when Sitriuc Silkenbeard had been reinstated into the kingship of Dublin by his recently acquired father-in-law, Brian Bórama. On the other hand, what

4 H.B. Clarke, 'Proto-towns and towns in Ireland and Britain in the ninth and tenth centuries' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 377. See the argument in H.B. Clarke, 'Quo vadis? Mapping the Irish "monastic town"' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Princes, prelates and poets in medieval Ireland: essays in honour of Katharine Simms* (Dublin, 2013), pp 261–78. 5 E. Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the medieval world, AD400–1000: landscape, kingship and religion* (Dublin, 2014), p. 62. 6 *AT*, p. 238; *CS*, s.a. 987; *AFM*, s.a. 988. 7 P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Viking Dublin' in H.B. Clarke and A. Simms (eds), *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the ninth to the thirteenth century*, 2 pts (Oxford, 1985), i, p. 115.

happened in the year after the great battle? The restored high-king, Máel Sechnaill, completed with dramatic effect and even ease the business left unfinished by his Munster-based opposite number, by launching a major plundering expedition into Leinster. In the course of that he captured Dublin once again and burnt the fortified settlement (*dún*), including all of the houses outside the main enclosure.⁸ Even if the king of Mide was present on the battlefield in 1014, he had clearly succeeded in preserving the military capacity of his own men. Irrespective of what had occurred on the field of battle at Clontarf, there can be little doubt that the political victor was Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill. The tragic death of his great Munster rival has surely overshadowed this underestimated high-king of Ireland.⁹

What can be said about that other royal survivor of the carnage at Clontarf, the king of Dublin, Sitriuc Silkenbeard?¹⁰ For a start, it can be suggested that he, too, has been underestimated. Undoubtedly he led a chequered career and he was eventually deposed in old age, but he remained king, with two short breaks, for almost half a century – a major achievement in early medieval Europe and the late Viking Age. In relation to the Battle of Clontarf it is normally, though not universally, stated that Sitriuc did not fight in it and that he was not even present on the battlefield. According to *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, Amlaíb's son (Sitriuc), his mother (Gormlaith) and Brian's daughter (Sláine), all unnamed, watched the course of the fighting 'on the battlements of his own chamber'.¹¹ In an invented conversation Sláine insults her husband by averring that the Vikings deserved to be pushed into the waters of Dublin Bay, there to drown, whereupon Sitriuc became angry and struck her a blow that knocked a tooth out of her head.¹² None of this inspires much confidence as to its historical veracity. Two other literary sources, both in Old Norse, were written down as we have them even later. *Orkneyinga saga* (c.1200) implies that King Sitriuc was present on the battlefield in support of Jarl Sigurðr, but that he fled the scene.¹³

8 CS, s.a. 1013; AFM, s.a. 1014. 9 For a judicious assessment by Charles Doherty, see *DIB*, vi, pp 228–31. 10 Old Norse *silki* is derived from Latin *sericum* (R. Cleasby and G. Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English dictionary* (2nd ed. Oxford, 1957), p. 528). Silken headbands and other pieces of cloth have been recovered in significant numbers from Dublin excavations as household debris, suggesting that 'here prince and merchant, housewife and artisan were closely linked in their daily life so that the ornaments of power were well distributed throughout the population' (E. Wincott Hackett, *Viking-Age headcoverings from Dublin* (Dublin, 2003), p. 109). 11 CGG, pp 190–1: *ar scemled a grianan fein*. 12 Ibid., pp 180–1, 190–3, 258, the latter detail preserved only in the Brussels manuscript. On Gormlaith, see W.A. Trindade, 'Irish Gormlaith as a sovereignty figure', *Études celtiques*, 23 (1986), 143–56; M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Tales of three Gormlaiths in medieval Irish literature', *Ériu*, 52 (2002), 1–24; *DIB*, iv, pp 157–8 (by A. MacShamhráin); C. Wade, 'Contextualizing Gormlaith: portrayals and perceptions of a medieval Irish queen' (MPhil, TCD, 2012); H.B. Clarke, 'The mother's tale' in S. Booker and C.N. Peters (eds), *Tales of medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2014), pp 52–62. 13 *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. F. Guðmundsson (Reykjavík, 1965), p. 27; *Orkneyinga saga: the history of the earls of Orkney*, trans. H. Pálsson and P. Edwards (London, 1978), p. 39.

Amid intimations of sorcery and the supernatural, *Njáls saga* (c.1280) places King Sitriuc in command of one flank before having him take to flight and his army with him.¹⁴ No mention at all is made of Máel Mórda, the king of Leinster, and no historical credence can be attached to the details of this overtly literary creation.

There would have been a perfectly legitimate and reputable reason that the king of Dublin did not lead his troops into battle at Clontarf. Given the persistence of the Munster forces during the prolonged siege of the previous autumn, it would have been all too obvious that a prime objective was to take control of the town. Historical hindsight tells us that Brian's army failed to achieve its main objective both in the autumn of 1013 and in the spring of 1014, but hindsight was not an advantage that Sitriuc enjoyed at that critical juncture. An imperative would have been to defend Dublin in the event of a Munster victory, followed by another attack or siege. The consequences of failure would have been a powerful memory dating back fourteen years. Someone would have been required to take command of defensive operations and the natural choice would have been the king himself. During the course of the battle, therefore, Sitriuc's role was that of a garrison commander.¹⁵ In that respect the author of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* was nearer the mark than those of the Norse sagas.¹⁶ This is true even if the putative *Brjáns saga* was written in Dublin.¹⁷ Age would not have been a factor: probably in his mid-forties in 1014, Sitriuc was not too old to fight on a battlefield.¹⁸ In the list of casualties in the Annals of Ulster, Sitriuc's half-brother Dubgall comes first among the Foreigners and it is reasonable to suppose that he had been placed, or had volunteered to be, at the head of the Dublin contingent. As a result, Sitriuc survived.¹⁹ In addition, despite a number of earlier setbacks, he had probably learnt some military lessons from past experiences.

¹⁴ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. E.Ó. Sveinsson (Reykjavík, 1954), pp 450, 452; *Njal's saga*, trans. M. Magnusson and H. Pálsson (London, 1960), pp 347, 348. ¹⁵ See CGG, pp 208–9.

¹⁶ For the presence of 'the Foreigners who were in Áth Cliath' ready, it then seemed, to give battle after the main event and taking orders from Sitriuc, see *ibid.*, pp 210–11. ¹⁷ As is suggested in D. Ó Corráin, 'Afterthoughts' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 447–52. ¹⁸ His depiction as the 'young king' (*konung ungan*) in the poem *Darraðarljóð* is hardly appropriate, except in relation to Brian (M. Ni Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru: Ireland's greatest king?* (Stroud, 2007), pp 91–2). ¹⁹ I should like to take this opportunity to correct an error of my own. This arose from an assertion that in the year 969 Murchad, the Uí Fáeláin king of Leinster and father of Gormlaith, had plundered Kells jointly with his grandson Sitriuc, the son of Amlaíb Cuarán (*AFM*, s.a. 967). The unlikelihood of Sitriuc's involvement was demonstrated in A. Woolf, 'Amlaíb Cuarán and the Gael, 941–81' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin III: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2001* (Dublin, 2002), pp 39–40. Accordingly, H.B. Clarke, 'The bloodied eagle: the Vikings and the development of Dublin, 841–1014', *Irish Sword*, 18 (1990–2), nn 103, 155 and *DIB*, viii, pp 974–5 stand in need of adjustment.

BEFORE THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF

Sitriuc Silkenbeard had come to the kingship of Dublin in dramatic circumstances in 989. On his father's major military defeat at Tara in 980 and brief retirement to Iona in the Inner Hebrides – another part of the Viking outback – the oldest of his sons Glún Iairn (Norse Jarnkné) had succeeded him. He in turn was murdered, reputedly while drunk, by one of his own slaves.²⁰ It would appear that the high-king, Máel Sechnaill II, decided to intervene forcefully. As Glún Iairn's half-brother and having, or having had, a relationship with Amlaíb's widow Gormlaith, it was partly a family matter.²¹ It is worth bearing in mind that, given the widespread practice and social acceptance of polygyny among the Irish aristocracy,²² Gormlaith may not have been Máel Sechnaill's chief, official wife. From among Amlaíb's surviving sons, a suitable successor had to be found. The settlement terms, whether or not they were adhered to, showed commitment. At that point in time, three of Amlaíb's known sons were still living – Aralt (Norse Haraldr), Dubgall and Sitriuc. It was the latter, Gormlaith's child, who was elevated and there can be little doubt that Máel Sechnaill was the king-maker. Though we cannot be certain, the other sons were probably the offspring of Amlaíb's first wife. Sitriuc was young, perhaps about 20 years of age, and he may have expressed a willingness to do his step-father's bidding, yet he comes across to us equally as an independent spirit.

One of the characteristics of Sitriuc's long reign, as of his father's earlier years, was an engagement in English affairs and with English ways of doing things. Of this the first indication takes the archaeological form of the biggest finds of English coins in Dublin, dated collectively to between c.990 and c.995, that is to say, very early in Sitriuc's reign.²³ The find-spots in Castle Street and Werburgh Street suggest that the eastern end of the natural east–west ridge was by then a dynamic focus of economic activity. If there was a royal hall and associated complex of buildings inside the defences, its location is unknown but a distinct possibility is the site of the later castle, overlooking the tidal pool that gave shelter and security to the all-important fleet of warships. Trading activity, on the other hand, may have been centred on the Essex Street West area, down by the River Liffey.²⁴ Overseas trading, then as now, tended to be competitive and rivalry seems to have been building up in particular with the Hiberno-Norse inhabitants of Waterford. Its king, Ímar (Norse Ívarr) belonged to a junior

²⁰ *AT*, p. 238; *CS*, s.a. 987; *AFM*, s.a. 988, the latter with a reordered sequence of events.

²¹ For a comparable earlier scenario, that of Lann of Osraige, see Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the medieval world*, pp 84–7 and table 3. ²² D. Ó Corráin, 'Women in early Irish society' in M. Mac Curtain and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *Women in Irish society: the historical dimension* (Dublin, 1978), p. 4; F. Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Dublin, 1988), pp 70–1, 79, 134. ²³ See Martin Byrne and Andy Woods in this volume. ²⁴ For a largely speculative map of Dublin c.1000, see H.B. Clarke, *Dublin, part I, to 1610* (Dublin, 2002), fig. 2 and for an artist's impression inspired by archaeology, see *ibid.*, pl. 1.

branch of the same Scandinavian dynasty and in 994 Sitriuc was expelled from Dublin, Ímar installing his own son Ragnall as its king. In traditional Viking style, the new ruler made a forceful, if fateful, political gesture by plundering a major church, at Donaghpatrick near Teltown, under Máel Sechnaill's patronage. The latter reacted with commendable decisiveness, capturing Dublin for the third time and removing trophies that are said to have included the ring of Thor (*fáil Tomair*).²⁵ If this was a heavy, oath-swearing arm-ring of a type known from other Scandinavian contexts, it suggests that a significant proportion of the warrior-merchants of Dublin, not excluding King Sitriuc himself, were still practising pagan observances. If so, this was of a piece with the king's willingness to recruit non-Christians to his cause in the winter of 1013–14.

In the event, Ragnall was killed by the Leinstermen and Sitriuc was restored to his kingship. Having resumed control, he made an unmistakable gesture towards the England of Æthelred II, by initiating a regular silver currency modelled on the *Crux* series then current.²⁶ These were high-grade imitations, made almost certainly by moneyers brought over from England. The coins are inscribed SIHTRIC REX DYFLINN (and variants) and they were intended in part, like coins elsewhere, to proclaim the ruler's authority. In this period, as in earlier centuries, coins could be as much a political as an economic phenomenon. One is reminded of the following observations:

During and after the eighth century, and step by step from the romanized parts of the west, the *denarius* was accepted as the most convenient means of effecting the transfer of assets, whether it were a question of a gift, the payment of a due or tax, or a sale. Its use became increasingly common, slowly at first, then more rapidly as silver immobilized in hoards was steadily released.²⁷

The obverse of Sitriuc's pennies bears a conventional, left-facing (and beardless) profile and bust, and he was the first king in Irish history to have his name and his image broadcast, at home and abroad, in this manner. But there were disadvantages as well. The wealth of Dublin as a commercial centre was even more visible than before and more easily transferable elsewhere. In 997, following on from the hegemonic carve-up of the island between Brian Bórama and Máel Sechnaill II, the Dubliners found themselves saddled with a more distant, yet still more ambitious, overlord to whom tribute was due. An orderly and regular transfer of silver from Dublin to Kincora may or may not have been envisaged

²⁵ *AT*, p. 242; *CS*, s.a. 993; *AFM*, s.a. 994. ²⁶ A. Woods, 'The coinage and economy of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XIII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2011* (Dublin, 2013), pp 45–6. ²⁷ G. Duby, *The early growth of the European economy: warriors and peasants from the seventh to the twelfth century*, trans. H.B. Clarke (London, 1974), p. 70. Much of the preceding discussion here may reflect the mental outlook of a modernizing king such as Sitriuc.

by either party, but it would have become a distinct possibility. Ironically Brian's famous deposition of twenty ounces of gold on the altar of the main church at Armagh in 1005 could have been financed by regular tributary payments in precious metals by the Dubliners.

Oppressive overlordship was soon to be resented and resisted, both in Dublin and in Leinster at large. The revolt was spearheaded by Sitriuc's maternal uncle, Máel Mórda, the future provincial king (1003–14), and supported by Sitriuc himself. Brian's response was to lead an army towards Dublin and the outcome was a heavy defeat for the rebels at Glenn Máma on the penultimate day of the year 999. Presumably by agreement, the Dublin contingent was led by Sitriuc's older brother Aralt, who lay among the dead that day; Sitriuc had survived yet again. He fled by sea to the north of Ireland, where he failed to find military support for a comeback. Instead he was obliged to sue for peace with his erstwhile step-father Brian Bórama, who by then had taken a third wife in place of Gormlaith. The date of this marriage is unrecorded, but on political grounds c.997 has been proposed.²⁸ The peace agreement was sealed in a typically medieval fashion: Sitriuc would become Brian's son-in-law by receiving as his (second) wife the Munster king's daughter Sláine. Brian must have calculated that the double bond of (former) step-father and (current) father-in-law would serve his purposes and, for more than a decade, he proved to be correct. For example, the Foreigners of Áth Cliath are specified in a list of participants in Brian's circuit of the north of Ireland as high-king in 1006.²⁹ They may well have taken part in other expeditions during Brian's quest for ultimate supremacy, including the famous visitation to Armagh in the previous year. Soon after the agreement Sitriuc had indulged in an old-fashioned naval exercise, raiding the Strangford shoreline and bringing back prisoners.³⁰ To some extent he may have been acting at Brian's behest if the political intention was to put pressure on the Ulaid.

After his restoration as king of Dublin, Sitriuc's immediate task would have been to organize the reconstruction of the town and its defences, as we have seen. One *possible* improvement was to replace the ancient ford across the River Liffey with a bridge (fig. 15.1). The solitary clue is a reference in *Chronicum Scotorum* to the construction of a causeway (*tochor*) to the middle of the river by King Máel Sechnaill II in 1001.³¹ In order to span a river roughly 300m wide at high tide, it would have been economical to deposit earth and rocks on the mudflats in the form of causeways from both directions, leaving the main tideway to be bridged in timber and/or stone. In 1001 Máel Sechnaill was still the high-king of Ireland and overlord of the northern half of the island. Perhaps he was engaged in a public duty of the kind that was standard in contemporary England,

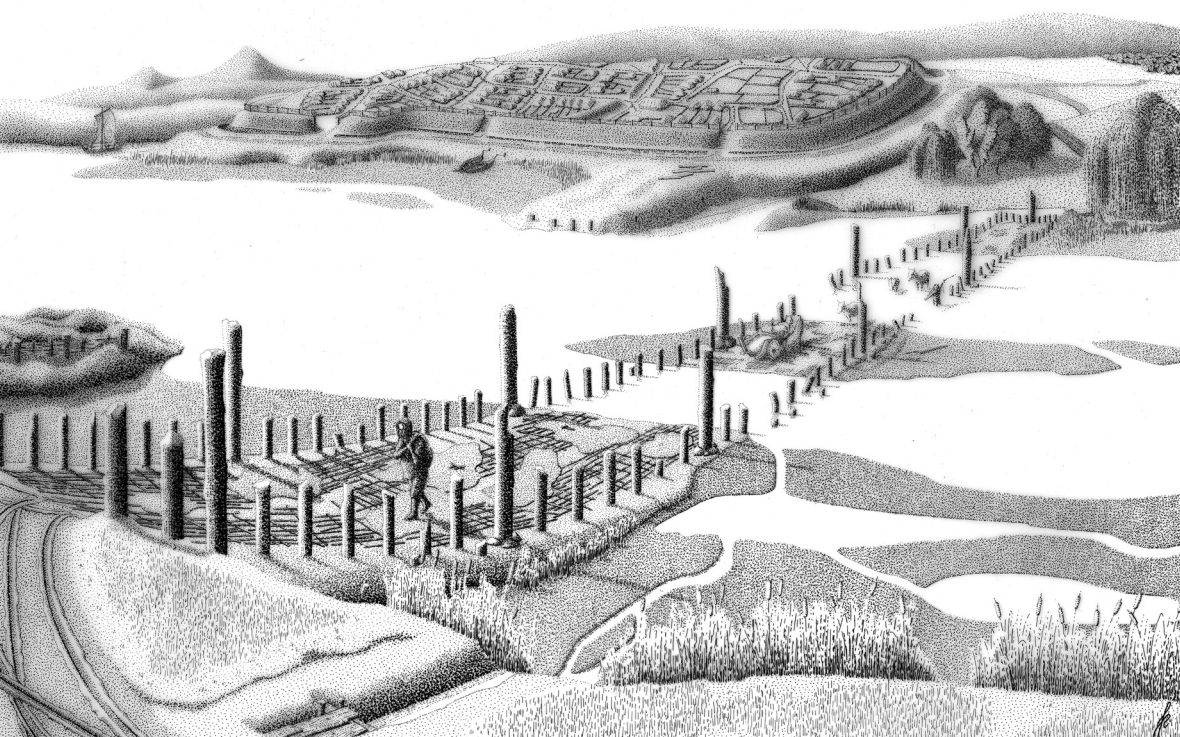
²⁸ Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru*, p. 32. ²⁹ *AI*, s.a. 1006. ³⁰ *AT*, p. 247; *AFM*, s.a. 1001. For the context, see P. Holm, 'The slave trade of Dublin, ninth to twelfth centuries', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 332–3. ³¹ *CS*, s.a. 999.

where one of the threefold duties (*trimoda* or *trinoda necessitas*) of landholding was bridgework.³² If this was the case, we can only speculate as to whether a matching causeway was commissioned by the high-king's southern counterpart at that time, Brian Bórama, or by more local initiative.³³ However that may have been, it should be added that the first certain reference to a bridge across the Liffey dates from over a century later.³⁴

Once Sitriuc's uncle Máel Mórda had assumed the provincial kingship (courtesy of the new high-king) in 1003, the former would have had to balance family pressures coming from different directions. He evidently managed to hold the line for a full decade until the political situation, always inherently unstable, began to unravel with dramatic consequences in 1013. Near at home we find him, in alliance with his uncle, dealing decisively with one of Máel Sechnaill's foraging parties in the act of plundering Fingal. Their joint forces are said to have killed between 150 and 200 of the raiders, including the king of Mide's eldest son, Flann.³⁵ That same year Sitriuc dispatched a naval expedition to another of Dublin's trading rivals, Cork, which was burnt. The local king Cathal mac Donnchada, however, then won a victory over the aggressors in the course of which a son and a nephew of King Sitriuc met their death.³⁶ The probability is that the years of comparative peace since the disasters of 999–1000 had been favourable to Dublin's mercantile prosperity.³⁷ The lists of plunder taken by Brian's troops hint strongly at the town's trading potential, as do a number of (later) Icelandic sources. From Iceland, the recommendation was to head south to Dublin.³⁸ The attack on Cork suggests that Sitriuc's initial motive for rebellion against his father-in-law was economic; later it became political with the involvement of his uncle Máel Mórda. The scene was set for the great confrontation, once Dublin's military weakness had been compensated for by Viking mercenaries.

32 H.R. Loyn, *The governance of Anglo-Saxon England, 500–1087* (London, 1984), pp 33–4.

33 Dubgall's bridge, over either the Liffey or the Tolka, features in *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*'s description of the final stages of the Battle of Clontarf (CGG, pp 184–5; Duffy, *Brian Boru*, p. 210). Its naming, if authentic, could reflect responsibility for its original construction or that Dubgall met his death there when attempting to retreat back to the safety of the town. 34 *AFM*, s.a. 1112. 35 *AU*, s.a. 1012; *CS*, s.a. 1011; *AFM*, s.a. 1012, the former giving the smaller number of slain. 36 *AU*, s.a. 1012; *AI*, s.a. 1013; *CS*, s.a. 1011; *AFM*, s.a. 1012. The Annals of Inisfallen, followed by the Four Masters, mention only Dubgall's son, whose name Mathgamain reflects a developing Hiberno-Norse culture in contemporary Dublin. 37 See the excellent survey in B. Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes: dynasty, religion and empire in the north Atlantic* (Oxford, 2005), pp 88–95. 38 H.B. Clarke, "Go then south to Dublin; that is now the most praiseworthy voyage". What would Brynjólfr's son have found there? in A. Mortensen and S.V. Arge (eds), *Viking and Norse in the north Atlantic: select papers from the proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress, Tórshavn, 19–30 July 2001* (Tórshavn, 2005), pp 441–5. The Old Norse text dates from c.1200.



15.1 Artist's view of the hurdle ford of Dublin with the Viking *dún* in the distance (drawn by Johnny Ryan; © Johnny Ryan and Dublin City Council).

AFTER THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF

Four principal themes can be detected in the final phase of Sitriuc's career. First, from time to time we hear about local political entanglements, most predictably a hostile visitation on the part of his old nemesis, Máel Sechnaill II. In 1015, apparently without difficulty, the men of Mide took Dublin and burnt it, as we have already seen.³⁹ Meanwhile, following the death of Máel Mórda at Clontarf, the provincial kingship had reverted to the Uí Muiredaig sept based at Mullaghmast and then back to the Uí Fáeláin in the person of Máel Mórda's son, Bran. For unknown reasons the latter was blinded by Sitriuc Silkenbeard when on a visit to Dublin in 1018 and thereby in effect deposed.⁴⁰ Early in the following year Sitriuc led a raiding party to Kells and carried off many prisoners, presumably for ransom or the slave trade, which appears to have continued to be

³⁹ A line in one of two quatrains of a marginal addition to the Annals of Ulster's death notice, to the effect that he drew a cry of fear from the Foreigners, contains a ring of truth (*AU*, s.a. 1022). ⁴⁰ *AU*, s.a. 1018; *ALC*, s.a. 1018; *AI*, s.a. 1018; *CS*, s.a. 1016, the two latter adding 'through treachery'. Bran's successor was the Uí Muiredaig Augaire (1018–24). Sitriuc's action appears to have destabilized the rotating provincial kingship monopolized for centuries by the Uí Dúnlainge, which came to an end in the year of Sitriuc's death (Duffy, *Brian Boru*, p. 245).

a source of Dublin's wealth.⁴¹ This initiative may also have been linked to the changeover in the provincial kingship.⁴² Sitriuc's relationship with King Augaire deteriorated, however, and his raiding party was thoroughly defeated at Delgany, Co. Wicklow, two years later.⁴³ Naval supremacy was still not assured either, as in 1022 when a Dublin fleet was decimated in a battle with ships commanded by Niall mac Eochaid of the Ulaide; some of the crewmen were killed and others taken prisoner along with their ships.⁴⁴ Some time later Niall led a raiding party on Dublin itself, burning and plundering its hinterland.⁴⁵ Both in 1025 and 1026 the Dubliners were obliged to hand over hostages to competitors for the high-kingship during the power vacuum that followed on from Máel Sechnaill's death in September 1022.⁴⁶ These and other incidents show that in the years 1014–28 Sitriuc and his townspeople found themselves at the mercy of more powerful forces; political survival was the name of their game.⁴⁷

The second theme relates to the establishment of a Dublin colony on the island of Anglesey in Wales and, by extension, to Sitriuc's involvement with an even more powerful king than any in Ireland – Knut the Great, the ruler ultimately of England, Denmark and Norway. Trading with the Welsh is hinted at strongly in 1029 when Sitriuc's son Amlaíb (the second of that name, whose mother was Sláine) was captured by the men of Brega and held to ransom. Together with 1,200 cows and 60 ounces each of gold and silver came a demand for 120 Welsh ponies.⁴⁸ Some time after his release, Amlaíb was given a position out of harm's way as the governor of a colonial outpost at Moel-y-Don Ferry, near Abermenai in eastern Anglesey.⁴⁹ This settlement appears to have been the outcome of a joint naval expedition by ships from Knut's England as well as from Sitriuc's Dublin in the year 1030.⁵⁰ Perhaps in imitation of his father (and Knut), however, Amlaíb set out for Rome on a pilgrimage in 1034, only to be murdered in mysterious circumstances while still in England.⁵¹ Nevertheless,

41 *AT*, p. 249; *CS*, s.a. 1017; *AFM*, s.a. 1018. Others were killed on the spot, even in the middle of the church, implying a political motive as well. On the slave trade during Sitriuc's reign, see Holm, 'Slave trade of Dublin', pp 331–4. A not so distant reflection of it may have been the distinctly western bias in the geographical distribution of male and female slaves in England in 1086 (H.C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), figs 25, 26, 33).
 42 Holm, 'Slave trade of Dublin', 333. 43 *AU*, s.a. 1021; *AT*, p. 251; *ALC*, s.a. 1021; *AFM*, s.a. 1021. 44 *AU*, s.a. 1022; *AT*, p. 253; *AFM*, s.a. 1022. 45 *AU*, s.a. 1026; *CS*, s.a. 1022; *AFM*, s.a. 1024. 46 *AU*, s.a. 1025, 1026; *AT*, p. 257; *CS*, s.a. 1024; *AFM*, s.a. 1025, 1026.
 47 Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, pp 108–10. 48 *AU*, s.a. 1029; *AT*, p. 261; *ALC*, s.a. 1029; *CS*, s.a. 1027; *AFM*, s.a. 1029. For other references to horse trading, see C. Swift, 'Taxes, trade and trespass: the Hiberno-Norse context of the Dál Cais empire in *Lebor na cert*' in K. Murray (ed.), *Lebor na cert: reassessments* (London, 2013), pp 47–9.
 49 B. Hudson, *Irish Sea studies, 900–1200* (Dublin, 2006), pp 53–4, 78. The complicated evidential background is well laid out, with references to primary and secondary sources, in C. Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular Viking zone', *Peritia*, 15 (2001), 157–61. 50 *AT*, p. 262; Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles', 161–2; Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, pp 120–1. 51 *AU*, s.a. 1034; *AT*, p. 266; *CS*,

Sitriuc Silkenbeard's bloodline would continue in north-west Wales, for Amlaíb's daughter Ragnhild would marry the Welsh prince Cynan ap Iago and they in turn would become the parents of Gruffudd ap Cynan, the redoubtable ruler of Gwynedd from 1081 to 1137.⁵² On the other hand, male succession to Sitriuc was extinguished in Wales in 1036 when his last remaining son Gofraid (Geoffrey) was killed by the latter's cousin, a son of Sitriuc's predecessor as king of Dublin, Glún Iairn.⁵³ All of this raises the question of King Knut's attitude to Dublin and to its ruler, given that he involved himself to some degree in Welsh affairs.⁵⁴ It has been suggested, quite reasonably, that a second Dublin colony was in existence, in the city of London itself.⁵⁵ This is commensurate with charter evidence for the possible presence, on occasion, of Sitriuc Silkenbeard at the court of Knut the Great. The three relevant charters were written at Crediton in Devon, in the time of Bishop Lyfind (1027–46), and the question hinges on the identity of the witness Sihtric *dux*.⁵⁶ As Ben Hudson has emphasized, the benefits of such alliances were mutual;⁵⁷ after all, Knut and Sitriuc spoke a common language that we call Old Norse.

Regular contact with the England of King Knut and Bishop Lyfind would have demonstrable consequences for Dublin in addition to economic and political ones. In effect, the long-term transition from paganism to Christianity as the principal religion of the socio-political elite was finalized. Among the trophies seized from the Dubliners back in 995 had been the ring of Thor, while among the fighters recruited by Sitriuc before the Battle of Clontarf there had been presumed pagans. Fourteen years afterwards Sitriuc made a public gesture in the opposite direction, both geographically and religiously: he made a pilgrimage to Rome, in the company of the king of southern Brega, in 1028. In all likelihood he had been influenced, if not inspired, by Knut's mission in the previous year.⁵⁸ The arduous return journey was completed within the compass of a year – an impressive accomplishment for a man who was then probably approaching 60 years of age (Knut was much younger). On his return, it has reasonably been assumed, Sitriuc achieved his most enduring legacy: in association with a young Irish priest, Dúnán, he founded a cathedral in the heart of the town. Christianity, long tolerated in and around Scandinavian Dublin, was at last accorded official recognition. Sitriuc's personal contribution seems to have

s.a. 1032; *AFM*, *s.a.* 1034. Unfortunately, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is virtually silent at this juncture. ⁵² On the theme of Gwynedd as part of the 'Insular Viking zone', see Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles', *passim*. ⁵³ *AT*, p. 268. Transgenerational factionalism is a possible explanation (Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, p. 82). ⁵⁴ M.K. Lawson, *Cnut: the Danes in England in the early eleventh century* (London and New York, 1993), pp 106–7; Hudson, *Irish Sea studies*, pp 47–59. ⁵⁵ Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, p. 120; Hudson, *Irish Sea studies*, p. 51. ⁵⁶ Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, pp 121–2; Hudson, *Irish Sea studies*, pp 55–7. ⁵⁷ Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, pp 124–5. ⁵⁸ For the general background to church affairs in England at this time, see Lawson, *Cnut*, pp 117–60. Sitriuc's world view may well have been coloured

been adequate rather than generous: a site in the expanding town, land at Grangegorman and a quantity of gold and silver to help pay for the actual building.⁵⁹ His cathedral's religious orientation is highly significant and reminiscent of earlier initiatives that placed Dublin in an English milieu: the dedication to the Holy Trinity and the byname Christ Church are precisely those of Archbishop Æthelnoth's cathedral at Canterbury, by which Sitriuc had very probably passed on his way to and from Rome. And as Hudson has pointed out, piety need not have been Sitriuc's sole motivation, for bishops could be useful as royal allies, as in Conrad II's Germany.⁶⁰ It would soon become apparent that Sitriuc Silkenbeard's actions in Rome and in Dublin would have more far-reaching consequences than Brian Bórama's opportunistic gesture at Armagh a generation earlier.

Local politics, Welsh politics and the politics of giving his royal blessing to a critical mass of Christian adherents are three of these late recurrent themes. The fourth would lead to Sitriuc's ultimate defeat, though not to his death – a resumption of the feud with a major trading rival in the shape of Hiberno-Norse Waterford.⁶¹ Its king, Ragnall, a grandson of the Ímar who had expelled Sitriuc from Dublin in 994, was murdered when on a visit there in 1035.⁶² In the following year the old man was forced to abdicate by a representative of a rival dynasty that has been denoted as the Haraldssons. He was Echmarcach Ragnallsson, whose obscure origins have been sorted out by Colmán Etchingham and by Hudson.⁶³ Vengeance for what happened at Clontarf was still in the air, for the probability is that Echmarcach had reached an understanding with the reigning king of Munster, Donnchad, Brian Bórama's son by Gormlaith and Echmarcach's brother-in-law.⁶⁴ By 1036 both Gormlaith, Sitriuc's mother, and Knut, his powerful mentor, were dead and honourable exile appears to have been his only option. He is recorded as going 'across the sea', most likely to the colony in Anglesey.⁶⁵ His death is noted in 1042, but not his final resting-place.⁶⁶ That same month his last surviving child, Ceallach Finnén, a nun also died and with her the demise of the ruling dynasty established by Ímar the Boneless in the 850s.⁶⁷

by English circumstances. ⁵⁹ H.B. Clarke, 'Conversion, Church and cathedral: the diocese of Dublin to 1152' in J. Kelly and D. Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), pp 34–5. ⁶⁰ Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, p. 118. ⁶¹ Summarized in Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles', 181–2. ⁶² *AU*, s.a. 1035; *ALC*, s.a. 1035; *AFM*, s.a. 1035. The Annals of Tigernach record only the death of Knut for this year. See also Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru*, pp 105–6. ⁶³ Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles', 171–83, 187 (chart); Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, pp 3–18, 128–35 and fig. 4. ⁶⁴ Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, p. 134. ⁶⁵ *AT*, p. 268. ⁶⁶ *AI*, s.a. 1042; *AT*, p. 273; *AFM*, s.a. 1042. ⁶⁷ *AT*, p. 273; *AFM*, s.a. 1042; Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, p. 119 and n. 35. In general, see C. Downham, *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland: the dynasty of Ívarr to AD1014* (Edinburgh, 2007).

PROGNOSTICATIONS

'Like father, like son' is a familiar refrain; it certainly can be thought to apply to Amlaíb Cuarán and Sitriuc Silkenbeard. Both were married twice, to Irish women, and had a considerable number of children. Both expressed a keen interest in England, in Amlaíb's case in the Scandinavian (Danish) kingdom of York and in Sitriuc's case in the Scandinavian (Danish) kingdom of England. In preparation for a crucial battle against the superior forces of a high-king, both recruited Viking mercenaries from the Scottish Isles and (possibly in both instances) the Isle of Man. Both made a significant gesture late in life to the Christian religion – they became 'Christian princes'. Both ended their life in exile, one on a Scottish island and the other probably on a Welsh one. Their cultural horizons were at once Celtic, Norse and even Anglo-Saxon. In the 940s, when Amlaíb began to make his presence felt in northern England, Dublin was still essentially a Viking settlement; a century later in the 1040s, when his dynasty no longer ruled there, it was essentially Hiberno-Norse. Multiple elements of transition make this historical period difficult to characterize, at least for Dublin and its immediate hinterland. Their Englishing began long before 1170 and important contributors to that process were this particular father-and-son combination.⁶⁸ As in the case of his father, Sitriuc's cultural ambivalence appears to have been accompanied by a deep-seated personal ambivalence. This may be illustrated by an incident recorded in 1031. At Ardbraccan, south-east of Kells in Southern Uí Néill territory, Sitriuc and his fellow warriors committed a major atrocity in which an estimated two hundred people were burnt, alive, inside their stone church and an equal number taken away into captivity.⁶⁹ Even as his cathedral church was being built, old Viking values inherited by King Sitriuc were still capable of being resurrected. Such unworthy deeds, however, were commonplace in contemporary Ireland and had long been so. Four years later Sitriuc plundered the same place and in revenge, as before, Conchobar, a grandson of Máel Sechnaill II, did likewise to an important church under Sitriuc's patronage, that at Swords.⁷⁰

In an age when so many kings died violently and young, Sitriuc Silkenbeard was endowed, amply it would seem, with a deviousness and a ruthlessness that were matched only by an extraordinary ability to survive so many vicissitudes. A great deal more could be said about his character and life; this essay is no more than indicative. To date, by far the best treatment of this subject resides in two chapters of Hudson's recent work.⁷¹ More could be done, however, not least on

68 H.B. Clarke, '*Angliores ipsis Anglis*: the place of medieval Dubliners in English history' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Surveying Ireland's past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Annagret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), pp 42–7. 69 *AU*, s.a. 1031; *AT*, p. 264, which mentions only the plundering aspect; *ALC*, s.a. 1030; *CS*, s.a. 1029; *AFM*, s.a. 1031. 70 *AU*, s.a. 1035; *ALC*, s.a. 1035; *AFM*, s.a. 1035. 71 Hudson, *Viking pirates and Christian princes*, pp 79–127.

the theme of kingship and governance. In the latest evaluation it is pointed out, correctly, that there were elements of good governance *within* Irish kingdoms, focused in particular on the various functions of assemblies.⁷² But these assemblies were essentially localized institutions, comparable with the Scandinavian *þing*. They did not function effectively at provincial level, still less at national level. A provincial king and, even more, a high-king or would-be high-king had to use other means to enforce governance over a wider realm.⁷³ Some of these were relatively peaceful, such as the widespread custom of fosterage and the periodic taking of hostages, the latter always under threat of death or mutilation. Other means were more explicitly forceful: the annual circuit with an army, the exaction of tribute and ultimately military engagement, with victory in the latter resulting in the destruction of the loser's resources, both human and material. In other words, at macro-levels of governance warlordism rather than regular kingship prevailed.⁷⁴ No alternatives were developed, not even by Brian Bórama; any reading of the annalistic record makes this clear, century after century. And inside most kingdoms there was another recipe for internecine violence – extended royal families and multiple and competing claims of succession to kingship.⁷⁵ There is nothing surprising about the political and social consequences of early medieval masculinity in Ireland.

Sitriuc Silkenbeard was for the most part a small-time operator in this unstable environment. From time to time he engaged in disputes with his near neighbours north and south. His kingdom was smaller territorially than is sometimes supposed and its military capacity quite limited.⁷⁶ On occasion he also engaged in a hostile manner with Dublin's trading rivals, Cork and Waterford. But unlike most of his ruling contemporaries in Ireland, Sitriuc inhabited a wider mental world beyond the sea. Thus, when need arose, he acquired military assistance from Scotland and the Isle of Man; he established a base in north Wales, perhaps to protect shipping lanes to and from Chester; he developed contacts with the England of Æthelred II and Knut the Great; and late in life he made his famous journey to Rome and back. From England, early in his long reign, he borrowed an important element of a much more sophisticated kind of kingship – mintage of a high-quality silver currency issued in his name and bearing his own image. Later on he may have become aware of another facet of

72 Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the medieval world*, pp 68–77. 73 Defined as 'political clientship' in T. Charles-Edwards, 'Lebor na cert and clientship' in Murray (ed.), *Lebor na cert*, p. 19.

74 This remains the case even if one minimizes the distinction between tax and tribute, as in Swift, 'Taxes, trade and trespass', pp 41–7. 75 Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the medieval world*, pp 77–101. 76 H.B. Clarke, 'Unsung heroes: the Irish and the Viking wars' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 61–3; H.B. Clarke, 'From Dyflinnarskiri to the Pale: defining and defending a medieval city-state, 1000–1500' in J. Ní Ghrádaigh and E. O'Byrne (eds), *The march in the islands of the medieval West* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), pp 37–8.

effective early medieval kingship – the granting of land charters. In addition, quite literally, he spoke the language of Scandinavian Europe, Old Norse. His most lasting tangible legacy is, of course, the older of Dublin's two medieval cathedrals. In the context of late tenth- and early eleventh-century Ireland, Sitriuc was a king with a difference. He was not always successful, but in a manner of speaking he was outstanding, not least as a great survivor. Can we conclude therefore that, Pirandello-like, King Sitriuc Silkenbeard of Dublin is one of those characters in search of an author?

Through a glass darkly: some sidelights on Viking influence on personal names and place-names in Ireland

GILLIAN FELLOWS-JENSEN

This essay opens with a brief account of the author's earlier work on names in England and elsewhere. A discussion of a few of the more interesting Nordic personal names that occur in the Irish annals shows how these can be difficult to recognize for readers unfamiliar with the Irish language. It is generally easier for such readers to recognize the place-names in Ireland that were coined or influenced by the Vikings, perhaps because it was through the medium of English that these names were introduced to the Anglo-Normans who recorded them. Islands around the coast often received names of Nordic origin. In the case of habitation names, the influence of the Vikings on the name of the capital city merely ensured that of the two earlier settlement sites there, it was the name of the anchorage at Duiblinn rather than the ford at Áth Cliath that became the internationally known Dublin. Most of the surviving major names of Nordic origin are originally topographical names borne by Viking strongholds. There are just a few names consisting of the Irish word *baile* and a Viking forename or clan name that may reflect the organization by the Vikings of their agricultural hinterlands.

For the last half-century I have studied the personal names and place-names of Scandinavian origin that are found outside the homelands of the Vikings. My first foray was into the personal names recorded in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, where Viking settlement was most intense.¹ Next I looked at the relevant place-names in these two English counties and the immediate neighbours.² By this time I had realized the need to look outside the Danelaw, even though this was going to involve material of Celtic origin. Various attempts in this direction culminated in papers dealing with the Isle of Man,³ the Scottish islands⁴ and

1 G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian personal names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1968). 2 G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1972); G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in the east midlands* (Copenhagen, 1978). 3 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian settlement in the Isle of Man and northwest England: the place-name evidence' in C. Fell et al. (eds), *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Select papers from the Ninth Viking Congress* (London, 1983), pp 37–52; G. Fellows-Jensen, 'The mystery of the bý-names in Man', *Nomina*, 24 (2001), 33–46. 4 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Viking settlement

central and southern Scotland.⁵ Emboldened by such ventures, I turned my attention to one of the most complicated settlement situations involving the Vikings in England – the area to the west of the Pennines.⁶

An aching gap in my research was Ireland, largely because of linguistic shortcomings. I was naturally aware that the Vikings had played a significant role in Ireland and I was not averse to trying to remedy the situation. I attended courses at the University of Copenhagen in Modern and Old Irish in a conscientious, although ultimately unavailing, pursuit of enlightenment. This was not the fault of the Irish lecturer there, the late James Stewart. He was a serious scholar and a good friend, and it is to him that I am indebted for ensuring that my library is quite well supplied with relevant material. In addition, the late Éamonn de hÓir took considerable care to explain to me the recorded spellings of Irish names in Domesday Book and to suggest correct phonetic transcriptions. Since then, younger Irish colleagues have willingly given advice. On this basis I dealt briefly with the names of some of the islands around the coast of Ireland and the names of important strongholds there in two papers.⁷ My aim now is simply to show how some light can be thrown upon the names recorded in Irish sources by those recorded elsewhere.

NORDIC PERSONAL NAMES IN THE IRISH ANNALS

It has been interesting to compare the wealth of annalistic material surviving in Ireland with contemporary English and Norman annals and chronicles. In an earlier study I showed how English and Norman writers elected to represent the names of the Viking leaders in forms that had been linguistically adapted to assimilate them with English or Frankish personal names.⁸ Among the early Danish leaders named in the *Annales regni Francorum* for 812, for example, are Sigifridus, Herioldus and Godofridus. These are the men whose names are generally normalized in Danish as Sighfrith, Harald and Guthfrith. In the French annals the individual components of the names have been assimilated to their Frankish cognates: Sigi–, Heri–, Godo–, –frid and –o(a)ld. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the Scandinavian names appear in forms such as Sig(e)ferð,

in the Northern and Western Isles: the place-name evidence as seen from Denmark and the Danelaw' in A. Fenton and H. Pálsson (eds), *The Northern and Western Isles in the Viking world: survival, continuity and change* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp 148–68. 5 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in southern Scotland?', *Nomina*, 13 (1989–90), 41–60. 6 G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in the north-west* (Copenhagen, 1985). 7 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian place-names of the Irish Sea province' in J. Graham-Campbell (ed.), *Viking treasure from the north west: the Cuerdale hoard in its context* (Liverpool, 1992), pp 31–42; G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Nordic names and loanwords in Ireland' in A.–C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 107–13. 8 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian personal names in foreign fields' in Conseil régional de Basse-Normandie, *Recueil d'études en*

Harold and Guðferð or –frið, although they do not always follow the regular patterns of assimilation. When a Scandinavian name does not have an exact Norman or English cognate, as is the case with the Danish byname Hálfdanr, for example, the names were simply translated. Hálfdanr becomes Halptani in the *Annales regni Francorum* (782), Halbdeni in the *Annales Fuldenses* (873) and H(e)aldfene in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (871). In the Irish sources all the Nordic names are assimilated: for example, Sigh– as Si– in Sitriuc (914),⁹ Har– as Ar– in Aralt (940),¹⁰ Guth– as Go– in Gofraid (1094),¹¹ and Hálfdanr as Albdan (867).¹²

The Irish annalists would thus seem to have acted in the same way as the French and the English when dealing with Viking names, but originally Nordic names can be more difficult to recognize in their Irish disguises. I shall discuss here just a few Nordic personal names that became relevant in Ireland after the church of Rechru on Lambay Island, off the coast of Meath, and the monasteries of Inishmurray, off Sligo, and Inishbofin, off Connemara, became the first victims to be plundered by the Vikings (795).¹³ Although the Viking raids in England and Ireland thus began almost at the same time, the raids on Ireland were much more frequent in the late eighth and early ninth centuries than in England, as shown strikingly by the sequence of maps presented by David Hill.¹⁴

The first Viking leader known to have been killed in Ireland was Saxulf, who with a large fleet ravaged the lands round the Boyne and the Liffey and was slain in 837.¹⁵ In the Annals of Ulster his name is spelt Saxoibl. Men called Saxulf also gave their names to Saxelby in Leicestershire and Saxilby in Lincolnshire,¹⁶ while there was a Domesday tenant called Saxulf(us) in Barkston and Weardley in the West Riding of Yorkshire.¹⁷

It was in the middle of the ninth century that the name-form Iargna first occurred in the Irish annals. Iargna is described as a chieftain or king of the Lochlannaig, that is the Norwegian fleet.¹⁸ It is almost a century since attention was drawn to this name by the Norwegian Carl Marstrander.¹⁹ It must have originated as a Nordic byname, Jarnkné, ‘iron knee’. Noting that the name suggests that some form of metal knee-protection was employed as early as the ninth century, even if only occasionally, Marstrander pointed out that the form Iargna appears in the Ulster annals in records from 852, 882, 885 and 886, but that from 896 onwards the name always occurs in Irish translation as Glún Iairn, which confirms that there must have been close linguistic contact between the Vikings and the Irish in the ninth century. In an annal that may well be based on

homage à Lucien Musset (Caen, 1990), pp 149–59. ⁹ *FA*, pp 180–1, no. 459. ¹⁰ *AI*, s.a. 940. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, s.a. 1094. ¹² *FA*, pp 118–19, no. 330. ¹³ *AI*, s.a. 795. ¹⁴ D. Hill, *An atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981), maps 49–57. ¹⁵ D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin 1972), p. 92. ¹⁶ Fellows Jensen, *East midlands*, p. 66. ¹⁷ TNA, E31/2/1 (Great Domesday Book), fos 315va, 330rb. ¹⁸ D. Ó Murchadha, ‘Nationality names in the Irish annals’, *Nomina*, 16 (1992–3), 68. ¹⁹ C.J.S. Marstrander, *Bidrag til det norske sprogs historie*

contemporary tradition, however, a king of the Lochlannaig called Oittir mc. Iarnгна, with the Nordic form of the father's name, was killed in a battle against the Saxons, perhaps as late as 911.²⁰ A man called Glún Iairne had a son called Glúntradna who died in 891. The second element of this latter name was thought by Marstrander to contain the bird-term *traona*, 'crane', a parallel to a mythological name *Trönubeina, 'crane-leg', borne by a slave-woman who is named in the Icelandic poem *Rígsþula*, which is first recorded in a fourteenth-century manuscript but which might be older. Later, a Glúniarn son of Olaf Cuarán entered upon an alliance with Máel Sechnaill II in 983.²¹ A Glún Iarn, who was the son of Amlaíb, became king of the Gaill or Scandinavian foreigners and was murdered by his own people in 989,²² while a Glún Iairn son of Diarmait, who was also king of the Gaill, was slain in 1070.²³

It is interesting to note that the name Glunier occurs several times in the English Domesday Book of c.1086 and that all the references probably refer to a Northumbrian thegn who had had a residence in the city of York and quite substantial holdings in Yorkshire in the reign of Edward the Confessor.²⁴ He probably came from Ireland. With the exception of East Witton in the North Riding and Bishopthorpe near York, all his holdings were in the West Riding, with concentrations in Skyrack wapentake and near Adwick le Street. This Glunier must be the Glonicorn filius Heardulfi who in company with two other thegns, Gamelbarn and Dunstan filius Ægelnoth, took part in an uprising against Earl Tostig in York in 1065.²⁵ It may be noted that Temple Newsam was shared between Glunier and a Dunstan, probably the son of Ægelnoth.²⁶ To the best of my knowledge, there are no references in English sources to *Jarnkné and none to Glunier other than those referring to the Domesday thegn.

The next name I want to discuss was borne by several Viking kings of various nationalities whose exploits are recorded in the Irish annals and chronicles. In modern English this name is generally written as 'Olaf', while in the Irish records the name regularly appears as 'Amlaíb'. A man of this name came to Ireland in 853, probably from one of the Viking settlements in Scotland. To penetrate the disguise provided by the Irish spelling it is necessary to trace the name back to its origin. It is a compound name consisting of two elements, both of which can be assigned meanings in the Scandinavian language, but where the actual compound no longer had a semantic meaning. The Primitive Scandinavian form can be represented as *Anu-laiþar, with the first element having the meaning 'ancestor' and the second 'inheritance', so that the general

i Irland (Kristiania, 1915), pp 45–6. ²⁰ *EA*, pp 170–1, no. 429. ²¹ *AU*, s.a. 982. ²² *AI*, s.a. 989. ²³ *Ibid.*, s.a. 1070. ²⁴ Fellows Jensen, *Lincolnshire and Yorkshire*, p. 103; TNA, E31/2/1, fos 298rb, 301rb (3 times), 301va, 311rb, 315rb (twice), 315vb (twice), 320ra, 332ra. ²⁵ O. von Feilitzen, *The pre-conquest personal names of Domesday Book* (Uppsala, 1937), p. 26. See the annals of John of Worcester for 1065 (D.C. Douglas and G.W. Greenaway (eds), *English historical documents, 1042–1189* (2nd ed. London, 1981), p. 225). ²⁶ TNA, E31/2/1, fo. 315rb.

ambiance of the name is in fact very suitable for a king but by no means restricted to use within a hereditary monarchy.²⁷ That the first syllable of the Nordic name still had a nasalized pronunciation when the name came to England and Ireland is clear from the early spellings. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the names of the kings known as Anlaf son of Guthfrith, king of Dublin (d. 942), Anlaf son of Sitric, also called Onlaf, king of Dublin and York (d. 981), An(e)laf Tryggvason, also called Unlaf, king of Norway (d. 1000), all reveal this.²⁸ The nasalization of the first element in the name also accounts, of course, for its spelling in the Irish sources as Amlaíb. Brian Ó Cuív has noted that down to the middle of the tenth century this form is found with reference to at least six Vikings in Dublin and Limerick, that there are three instances of the name used of an Irishman in the eleventh century and that over twenty men named Amlaíb occur in Ireland down to the year 1250.²⁹ It is significant that spellings with O— of the name of Anlaf Sitricsson appear in the C-version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 942 and on coins struck at York towards the end of his second reign there c.950.³⁰ At any rate, at some period before the arrival on the Insular scene of the Norwegian king called in English Olaf the Saint (1028–55), the pronunciation of the Nordic version of the name must have developed to its modern one. It is known that in Old West Scandinavian *n* was lost before *l* after a strongly stressed vowel soon after 900. A marked nasal quality of the vowel must still have survived throughout most of the tenth century, but later the vowel must gradually have lost its nasalization for, in runic inscriptions in Denmark, the characters representing ordinary *a* and nasalized *o* began to be interchangeable in the Viking period and with the development of the vowel from */a/to/o/* the ultimate identity of the forms Anlaf and Olaf was no longer recognized. Olaf the Saint was expelled from England by King Knut in 1028 and died in battle in 1030. He is always referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Olaf and this is the spelling employed for Olaf the Peaceful in 1066. In spite of the fact that the form Amlaíb survived in Irish sources until the thirteenth century, there is perhaps some evidence for a weakening or loss of nasalization in the forms Alāib and Ólaib occurring in the mid-twelfth-century Book of Leinster.³¹ Compare also the anglicized name Balally that I discuss below. In England there is possibly an instance of the non-nasalized *a* in the record of a name of a Lincolnshire tenant in Domesday Book in the form Allef,³² while nasalized forms are probably borne by two other tenants in Lincolnshire named Vnlof.³³ Confirmation that the spelling Vn— really does represent a nasalized form of the name Olaf is shown by the fact that the Yorkshire place-name Anlaby

27 Fellows Jensen, *Lincolnshire and Yorkshire*, p. 204. 28 Ibid., p. CIII. 29 B. Ó Cuív, 'Borrowed elements in the corpus of Irish personal names from medieval times', *Nomina*, 3 (1979), 48. 30 M. Dolley, *Viking coins of the Danelaw and of Dublin* (London, 1965), p. 26 and pl. XII, no. 40. 31 Marstrander, *Norske sprogs historie*, pp 62, 89. 32 TNA, E31/2/1, fo. 349va. 33 Ibid., fos 336rb, 350vb. See Fellows Jensen, *Lincolnshire and Yorkshire*, p. CIII.

appears as Vmlouebi and Vnlouebi in that source, but regularly as Anlauebi in the later sources. The Nordic name Olaf is not of frequent occurrence in England in any of its forms.

One Nordic personal name from the Viking period that is of quite frequent occurrence in England but whose existence in Ireland is almost forgotten is Grim. This is identical in form in Danish and English sources and occurs fairly frequently in Scandinavia and England. It has been pointed out that the name is in fact represented in Irish sources, in the form Gnim, in two references in seventeenth-century annals to a leader of the Vikings in Cork who was killed in the Fermoy area in 867.³⁴ In one he is called Gnimbeolu and in the other Gnim Cinnsiolaig.³⁵ Marstrander thought that the Gnim spelling might be erratic, possibly showing the influence of the Old Irish common noun *gním* denoting a division of land, while Ó Cuív suggested a couple of possible phonetic developments that might have caused the nasality of the second consonant.³⁶ Ó Cuív was investigating the survival of the name of the Cork Viking leader in the modern surname Ó Gnímh, but I was intrigued by the two bynames borne by the Cork Viking. It has been considered that *beolu* was a Celtic word, although Marstrander took it to be of Icelandic origin and to be compared with the forms Bjóla, Bjóli occurring as bynames in Icelandic sources with the meaning 'bucket'.³⁷ In a study dealing specifically with the names Bjóla and Bjólan, Helgi Guðmundsson argued that the model for the form Bjólan, which occurs twice in *Landnámabók*, is probably of Irish origin.³⁸ It is certainly evidenced in England, where it occurs as the name of a York moneyer under both Edward the Martyr and Æthelred with the spelling Beol(l)an,³⁹ as a Cheshire tenant of Domesday Book in the form Belam⁴⁰ and in the field-name Belanespot in Garstang in Lancashire.⁴¹ The Irish form Beól(l)án means 'little mouth'.⁴² The Irish form Cinnsiolaig, or better Cinnsiolach according to Ó Cuív, would seem to represent a translation or calque of an Icelandic Selshofuð, 'seal's head'. This byname is not recorded in Scandinavia, but it occurs in a runic inscription found in 1870 on an ornamented bronze strap-end discovered during the excavation of a tumulus at Greenmount, Co. Louth.⁴³ The transliteration of the runes reveals the name to be 'tomnal silshofop' and the complete inscription, which dates from the eleventh century, reads in translation 'Domnall seal's head owns this sword'. It is not strictly necessary for the Irish clan name Cennselaig to be the direct

34 Marstrander, *Norske sprogs historie*, p. 49. 35 *EA*, pp 124–5, no. 342. 36 B. Ó Cuív, 'The family of Ó Gnímh in Ireland and Scotland: a look at the sources', *Nomina*, 8 (1984), 64. 37 Marstrander, *Norske sprogs historie*, p. 49; E.H. Lind, *Norsk-Islandska personbinamn från Medeltiden* (Uppsala, 1920–1), pp 24–5. 38 H. Guðmundsson, *Um haf innan: vestrænir menn og íslensk menning á miðöldum* (Reykjavík, 1997), pp 171–2. 39 V. Smart, *Sylloge of coins of the British Isles. Cumulative indices*, 2 vols (London, 1981–92), i, p. 17; ii, p. 43. 40 TNA, E31/2/1, fo. 266vb. 41 E. Ekwall, *The place-names of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1922), p. 252. 42 B. Schulze-Thulin, 'Notes on the Old and Middle Irish loanwords in Old Norse', *Nomele*, 39 (2001), 70, 72. 43 M.P. Barnes et al., *The runic inscriptions of Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin,

source of the Nordic byname in the inscription, since there is evidence that the shape of a man's head was a not uncommon source of inspiration for the bestowing of a byname. One may note, for example, *ballhofuð*, 'roundhead' and anyone who has seen the head of an inquisitive seal popping up in one of the harbours round our coasts would realize what a tempting byname 'seal's head' is. Since one of Grim's bynames may well have originally been Nordic *bjóla*, I am inclined to look upon Beolu as a corrupt variant of this, while Cinnsiolach may be a rough calque on the Nordic word.

NORDIC AND POSSIBLY NORDICIZED PLACE-NAMES IN IRELAND

While it has not been easy to explain the Nordic personal names in the Irish annals, most of the Nordic place-names in Ireland are less problematic. The reason for the coining of the new names is less obvious. Some of the first localities to have been attacked by the Vikings were islands, but the Irish names of Inishmurray and Inishbofin survive unchallenged because in the first period of raiding the Vikings merely sought plunder and were not looking for land to occupy. Later, however, the Vikings began to exploit islands in various ways. Sometimes their Irish names were replaced by Nordic ones, but the older names are often still known and survive as the Irish version of the modern names employed internationally. A long and erudite article in French discusses many possible instances of Irish names betraying Nordic influence.⁴⁴

Taking my starting-point in Co. Antrim, I shall discuss some of the names that may show Viking influence, following a clockwise route around the coast (pl. 16). The first example is atypical. The Skerries, the low, rocky islands in the Atlantic off Portrush in Co. Antrim, have a descriptive name that the Irish borrowed from the Nordic word *sker*, which denotes an isolated rock in the sea, and it would in fact be more correct to describe it as an Irish name coined by Irishmen employing a Norse loanword. I shall therefore say no more about it and other names containing this word, such as Skerries in Co. Dublin.⁴⁵

Sketrick Island is connected by a causeway to the west bank of Strangford Lough in Co. Antrim. The earliest recorded forms of the name are Scatra (1178), Scath Deirce (1470) and Skaterig (1595).⁴⁶ The 1470 form is perhaps the older name of the island, although its meaning is uncertain. Most of the other recorded forms would seem to represent a Nordic name in which the second element is *(h)rygg*, meaning 'ridge'. There has been a good deal of discussion about the meaning of the first element *skati*, but in the light of Doreen Waugh's

1997), pp 50–3. ⁴⁴ D. Mac Giolla Easpaig, 'L'influence scandinave sur la toponymie irlandaise' in É. Ridet (ed.), *L'héritage maritime des vikings en Europe de l'Ouest* (Caen, 2002), pp 401–82. ⁴⁵ P. McKay, *A dictionary of Ulster place-names* (Belfast, 1999), p. 132. ⁴⁶ G. Stockman (ed.), *Place-names of Northern Ireland*, 8 vols (Belfast, 1992–2004), ii, pp 25–6.

detailed discussion of the Shetland place-name Scatness, I would now take it to be Nordic *skati*, meaning 'something projecting'.⁴⁷ The island may once have been joined or apparently joined to the mainland. One complication about the name Sketrick is that it has two rather close parallels in Co. Down, namely Skateridge, the name of a hill in Ardrin townland and a minor name spelt 'Seatritch' on the map, but pronounced [skatritʃ] in the townland of Kilfeaghan.⁴⁸ As noted by Kay Muhr, these two names may be of the same origin as Sketrick, but it has to be admitted that both Skateridge and Seatritch lie well inland and are less likely to have been given a Nordic name than Sketrick in Strangford Lough, where a Viking presence seems certain.

Copeland Island in Co. Down is in fact a group of three small islands off Belfast Lough that can probably be identified with the islands said to lie on the route to Man that are referred to in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the Icelandic *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* as *Kaupmanna-eyjar*, that is 'islands of the merchants'.⁴⁹ It is possible that a 1570 chart-form Helaine Harr[o]n[e] represents a dative-singular form of the word *ára*, 'kidney' and meaning something like 'kidney-shaped ridge', for the form is roughly appropriate, while the Icelandic name suggests that merchants used the islands for transshipment of their wares. It is conceivable that the later forms Copland and Copeland could be adaptations to the Nordic word *kaup(a)land*, 'bought land', but it seems more likely to reflect the name of the de Coupland family, who are known to have arrived in the islands in Anglo-Norman times.⁵⁰

The church on Lambay off Co. Dublin, which was plundered by the Vikings in 795, has an early Irish name *Rechru* of obscure origin that survived in use among the Irish in 1308.⁵¹ There are a number of Irish islands that have related forms of this name, including Rathlin Island in Antrim, and the meaning may have been something like 'indented or rugged island'.⁵² The Nordic name *Lamba-ey, 'lambs' island' is certainly not related to the Irish one and presumably referred to the common practice of placing lambs (and other animals) on islands for fattening in the summer months.

Ireland's Eye is the English name of a small island at the northern end of Dublin Bay that the Vikings are known to have used as a place of refuge in 902, when they were starved into surrender.⁵³ It seems that the English name is the result of a mistranslation by the Norse of the Irish name *Inis Ereann*, 'the island of (a woman called) Eria', adding the Nordic word *ey*, 'island' to the name of Eire in the genitive case.

47 D. Waugh, 'In (and around) Scatness', *Northern Studies*, 36 (2001), 69–90; D. Waugh, 'Some place-names from the Old Scatness project, Shetland', *Nomina*, 26 (2003), 29–41.

48 Stockman, *Place-names of Northern Ireland*, vi, pp 76–7. 49 Ibid., ii, pp 171–2; G. Vigfússon (ed.), *Hákonar saga and a fragment of Magnus saga with appendices* (London, 1887), p. 148. 50 McKay, *Dictionary*, p. 47. 51 P.W. Joyce, *Irish names of places* (4th ed. Dublin, 1875), p. 110. 52 McKay, *Dictionary*, pp 123–4. 53 A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: the history and archaeology of two related Viking kingdoms*, 2 vols in 1 (Dublin, 1987),

Taking the same liberty as the second-century geographer Ptolemy, I stretch my identification of an island to embrace the conspicuous promontory near Dublin, now known as Howth, Co. Dublin. Its Nordic name is *Hǫfði, 'headland linked to the mainland by a narrow neck of land'.⁵⁴ Its old Irish name was Beann Éadair, 'the peak of Édar', which is supposed to have been the name of a legendary Irish hero, but is more likely to be a reflex of the very old name for the locality, Edrou, which in the form Αδρου is ascribed in Ptolemy's geography to an uninhabited island, but is considered by scholars to refer to the Howth headland.⁵⁵

At the south end of Dublin Bay, just off Dún Laoghaire, we find the tiny island of Dalkey, which was used by the Vikings as a place of refuge after a defeat in 944 and at other times for holding prisoners.⁵⁶ Its Irish name was recorded in the Annals of Ulster under the year 733 as Deilginis Cualann, 'the thorn (or cloak-pin) island of Cuala'.⁵⁷ The Nordic name Dalkey, which is first attested in 1229 as Dalkeye, would seem to be a compound of the Nordic word *dalk*, meaning 'cloak-pin' or 'dagger', which the Vikings may have borrowed directly from Irish, although both nationalities may have borrowed the word from the same obscure source, with the explanatory Nordic *ey*, 'island'.

From Dalkey we move south to the Saltees, Co. Wexford. These are two islands, Great and Little Saltee, which lie off the south coast. The names must go back to Norse **Salt-ey*, 'salt island'. It seems to be the general idea that the name reflects the salt that was carried over the islands by wind and wave, but I wonder whether it might not have a more practical significance. In Denmark, for example, the island of Saltholm, close to Copenhagen airport, has borne this name since 1231. It is explained as meaning 'the salt(y) island', probably because of the lack of fresh water there.⁵⁸

We must now go west to Dursley Island at the tip of the Beara peninsula in Co. Cork. Its ancient name was Inis Baoi.⁵⁹ Five kilometres to the west of the island stands the Bull Rock, earlier known by several names, including An Tarbh, 'the bull'. It is not therefore unreasonable to suggest that the Vikings gave to the island the name **Þjórs-ey*, 'bull's island'. For the pronunciation of the diphthong one might compare the development in the Caithness place-name Thurso <*þjórs-á, 'bull's water'. It is more difficult to explain the substitution of *D-* for *Þ-* and I can only suggest that the less frequently occurring *þjór* became confused with the more frequent *djúr*, which could mean either 'deer' or 'four-footed animal'.

ii, p. 240. 54 M. Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names in Ireland' in B. Almqvist and D. Greene (eds), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15–21 August 1973* (Dublin, 1976), pp. 126, 131. 55 G. Toner, 'Identifying Ptolemy's Irish places and tribes' in D.N. Parsons and P. Sims-Williams (eds), *Ptolemy: towards a linguistic atlas of the earliest Celtic place-names of Europe* (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 79, n. 12. 56 Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*, ii, p. 118. 57 Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', p. 131. 58 B. Jørgensen, *Stednavneordbog* (2nd ed. Copenhagen, 1994), p. 244. 59 M. Mac Carthaigh, 'Dursley Island and some place-names',

Moving west to Kerry and venturing farther out to sea we find the Skelligs, about 13km west of Bolus Head. This is a group of islets and skerries. The forms *sceillig* and *sceillec* are found as appellatives in the Old Irish Dictionary, but since no satisfactory Irish etymology had been found for them, Magne Oftedal thought it reasonable to look for a Nordic explanation, even though the name-form *Scelec* is recorded in the Annals of Inisfallen under the year 824, where the monastery was plundered by the heathens.⁶⁰ This date is undoubtedly early for a Norse name to have been adopted by the Irish, but the name of such conspicuous seamarks might well have been borrowed from Norse mariners even before the Vikings settled in Ireland. It has been noted, however, that Oftedal's argument does not take adequate account of well-attested occurrences of the word in a variety of different texts in its substantive meaning right back to c.700, certainly antedating Viking influence.⁶¹ It should incidentally be noted that even if the place-name had undergone Viking influence, the name-formation would theoretically have been an Irish one, as was the case with Skerries above.

A little farther north the name of the Blasket Islands has been said to contain the Nordic word *ey*, 'island'.⁶² Scatterry, the name of a monastery on an island in the Shannon Estuary in Co. Clare, has been explained as a nordicized version of Irish Inis Cathaig in which the Vikings must have erroneously carried over the final *s* of Inis to turn the island name into a parallel to Skateridge and Sketrick discussed above. The Old Irish name was used in the annals at least until 1130 and survives as the Irish name of the place; Scatterry may simply be an anglicized form.

Leaving the often rather doubtful coastal names, I turn my attention to the names of urbanized settlements, where more comprehensive documentation often facilitates a reliable interpretation of the Nordic or nordicized names. Before embarking on another clockwise excursion, however, I must address the problem of the name of the capital city. Dublin is ultimately an Irish name, of course, but the history of its survival requires some comment. That there were two centres of settlement in the Dublin of the Viking period is shown clearly in Howard Clarke's map of Dublin c.840, with one stronghold upstream of the Liffey, where three major routes intersect at the crossing place known as Áth Cliath, 'the ford of the hurdles'.⁶³ The second centre lies farther east, an ecclesiastical site called Duiblinn by the Irish, where the Vikings anchored their ships near the pool on the River Poddle and built their stronghold on the hillock nearby. The Icelandic sources refer to the town as Dyflinn and it is a version of this nordicized form, Difelin, that appears both in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Dinnseanchas, 2 (1966), 51–5. ⁶⁰ Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', pp 128–9. See *AI*, s.a. 824. ⁶¹ Noted by Teresa Bolger in E. Bourke et al. (eds), *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry: the monastery and South Peak. Archaeological stratigraphic report: excavations 1986–2010* (Dublin, 2011). ⁶² D. Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides' in P. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), p. 103. ⁶³ Illustrated in R. Johnson,

and in a lost street-name in the city of York, where Divelinstaynes (1233–9) was the name borne by a quay on the south-west bank of the Ouse, probably where Dublin goods had been loaded and unloaded.⁶⁴ Although it was the orthographical form Dublin that eventually survived in England, it was Viking influence that ensured that it was the name of the anchorage rather than that of the ford that became internationally accepted as the name of the capital city.⁶⁵ Within the city the presence of a Viking assembly place on the site of College Green is suggested by references in medieval sources to the massive earth-mound that was levelled to the ground in 1685 and which was known as Thengmota from Nordic *þingmót*, ‘assembly meeting-place’. Although the mound may pre-date the Viking Age, there have been archaeological finds there that can be dated to the tenth century.⁶⁶

Several of the other Viking strongholds around the coasts of Ireland have made less ambiguous contributions to Irish toponymy with names that must originally have denoted topographical features. Once again my treatment of these will start in the north-east corner of the land and work clockwise round the coast (pl. 16). The first three names all have as a second element the Nordic word *fjorð*, ‘fjord’ or ‘inlet’ and referred originally to three loughs offering shelter to the fleet. One name is now lost, but is considered to denote the present Larne Harbour in Co. Antrim.⁶⁷ The earliest written record is Wulfrichford (1210), while thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts of *Ólafs saga Helga* contain the variant spellings Ulfreksfirði and Ulfkelsfirði. I assume that the personal name in question was originally a nordicized version of English Wulfric, while Ulfkel represents an adaptation to a Nordic name that was of more common occurrence in the English Danelaw than in the Nordic homelands.

The second fjord name is Strangford, Co. Down. The settlement name occurs as Strangfiord in 1205. The lough itself is very imposing and the tidal currents at its narrow entrance between Strangford and Portaferry are certainly powerful enough to deserve the Nordic epithet ‘strong’.⁶⁸ The Irish name for the lough is Loch Cuan, ‘the loch of harbours or bays’, also a very appropriate name.

The third fjord name is Carlingford. The settlement stands on the south shore of the lough in Co. Louth. The first element of the name, Nordic *kerling*, ‘old woman or hag’, was probably used figuratively with reference to the three mountain tops that face the pilot entering the lough and are known locally as The Three Nuns.⁶⁹ Earlier Irish names for the lough were Snám Aigneche, ‘swift sea channel’ and Cuan Snáma Ech, ‘bay of the sea-channel of horses’.

Viking-Age Dublin (Dublin, 2004), p. 12. ⁶⁴ G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘The Anglo-Scandinavian street-names of York’ in R.A. Hall (ed.), *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York* (York, 2004), p. 370. ⁶⁵ D. Greene, ‘The evidence of language and place-names in Ireland’ in T. Andersson and K.I. Sandred (eds), *The Vikings* (Uppsala, 1978), p. 122; Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*, ii, p. 238. ⁶⁶ Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*, ii, pp 239–40; Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin*, pp 26, 65. ⁶⁷ Oftedal, ‘Scandinavian place-names’, p. 132. ⁶⁸ McKay, *Dictionary*, p. 137.

The names of the next two Viking strongholds or trading centres share a different second element, namely Nordic *ló*, 'low-lying land at the water's edge'. It has been considered that the first element of Wicklow, Co. Wicklow, was the word *viking*, 'Viking', because of a record Wikingelo (c.1189), but Oftedal has argued that the Vikings did not use that term of themselves and he preferred to look at another early form, Wickelow, and translate it as 'grassy meadow by the *vík* or bay', treating Wikingelo as an instance of medieval antiquarianizing.⁷⁰ This may well be correct, but there is another way to explain the first element, namely as the Nordic personal name *Víking*, which was current in the Danelaw. The Old Irish name of the settlement was Cill-Maintain, 'the church of St Maintain'.

Also in Co. Wicklow we find Arklow. The earliest spelling of this name is Herketelou (1177), suggesting that the first element is the Nordic personal name Arnketil in the uncontracted form that shows either that the bearer was a tenth-century Viking or that he came from the Danelaw, where this form survived longer than in Scandinavia itself. It is interesting to note that among the comparatively few moneyers whose names occur on coins minted in Dublin in the late tenth century one is called Arcetel.⁷¹ The Irish name of this settlement is An tInbhear Mór, 'the big estuary'.

Moving south again we come to more strongholds with names containing the word *fjorð*, 'fjord'. The first is Wexford, Co. Wexford, which has a fifteenth-century English form Weysford. The first element of this name is obscure, but it may be a Nordic island name **Ueig*, 'the waterlogged one'.⁷² Alternatively Peder Gammeltoft has suggested the secondary genitive-singular form *vegs* of Nordic *vegr*, 'way'. The second fjord name is Waterford, Co. Waterford, where a rural *longphort* has been excavated at Woodstown. The stronghold was probably founded when 'a great fleet of Norwegians landed at Port Láirge, the Old Irish name of the settlement, in 914.⁷³ Waterford contains one of two Nordic words of identical form *veðr*, but with different meanings 'ram' or 'wether' and 'wind' or 'weather'.⁷⁴ David Mills has suggested that the name may reflect that wethers were loaded on boats here to be taken to other ports.⁷⁵

Between Waterford and the next known Viking stronghold at Cork, which does not have a surviving Nordic name, there is one significant feature along the coast that does have one, namely the promontory known as Helvick Head. This would seem to have taken its name from the bay at the entrance of which it stands and to be a Nordic **helluvík*, 'rock inlet'.⁷⁶ Kinsale Harbour, Co. Cork, may be another instance of an old Nordic name in 'fjord', surviving as an alternative name in the forms *Endelford* (1395, 1409) and *Endilworth* (1698).⁷⁷

69 Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', pp 132–3; McKay, *Dictionary*, p. 33. 70 Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', pp 129–30. 71 R.H.M. Dolley, *The Hiberno-Norse coins in the British Museum* (London, 1966), pl. I, no. 1. 72 Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', p. 133. 73 *FA*, pp 180–1, no. 458. 74 Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', p. 133. 75 A.D. Mills, *A dictionary of British place-names* (Oxford, 2003), p. 485. 76 A. Sommerfelt, 'Norse-Gaelic contacts', *Norwegian Journal of Linguistics*, 16 (1952), 226. 77 Mac Giolla Easpaig,

Rounding the south-western corner of Ireland we come to a harbour on the Dingle peninsula in Co. Kerry that had been known to the Irish as Muirbech, a term used for a 'breakwater' or a 'level strip of land along the coast'. The Vikings gave it a completely new name, Smerwick, 'butter inlet', perhaps from the fertility of the monastic farmlands lying around it.⁷⁸

The last stronghold name around the coast is Limerick in the county of that name. Its Irish name was Luimneach, 'bare patch of ground' and, if this had been borrowed directly into English by the Anglo-Normans, it would have been rendered in English as *Limneagh.⁷⁹ The modern English form of the name, however, shows that it must rather have been borrowed from the nordicized form *Hlymrek. This is recorded in the thirteenth-century Icelandic *Landnámabók* or Book of Settlements, where one of the informants is said to have been a Hrafn Hlymreksfari who had been for a long time *í Hlymreki á Írlandi*.⁸⁰ The first element of this place-name would seem to be *hlymr*, 'noise' and the second *rek*, 'jetsam', but it is simply a nordicized name.

Although it is mainly urbanized settlements that have acquired and retained Nordic names, there is a certain amount of evidence to show that the Vikings must have exercised some form of control over a fairly extensive hinterland to their towns.⁸¹ It is clear that urban communities cannot have depended entirely on pillage and import for all their daily necessities, but must have had assured local sources of supply. The hinterland of Dublin, the region referred to by the Icelanders as Dyflinnarskíri or Dublinshire and the northern part of which was known by the Irish as Fingal (Fine Gail or 'the land of the Foreigners'), must have been very extensive, stretching north towards Skerries, south towards Wicklow and west as far as Leixlip.⁸² Leixlip is one of the few Nordic settlement names to survive inland in Ireland. Its origin is **lax-hleypa*, 'salmon's leap' and reflects the importance for the Viking community in Dublin of salmon fishing in the Liffey.⁸³

There are also a few place-names in Dublinshire in which the Irish generic element *baile*, 'settlement' is compounded with a Nordic personal name or a kind of clan name consisting of the Irish genitive *mhic* of *mac* plus a Nordic personal name. This type of name reveals that the settlements in question must at one time have been in the hands of men with Nordic names. They are not easy to date. Liam Price has argued that there is no evidence for the use of the word *baile* to form place-names in Ireland before the middle of the twelfth century⁸⁴ and

'L'influence scandinave', pp 474–6. 78 Ó Corráin, 'Ireland, Wales, Man and the Hebrides', p. 103. 79 Greene, 'Evidence of language and place-names', p. 122. 80 J. Benediktsson (ed.), *Íslendingabók – Landnámabók* (Reykjavík, 1986), p. 162. 81 J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland' in J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin OSA* (Kilkenny, 1988), pp 51–6. 82 Ibid., p. 55, fig. 3:1. 83 Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place-names', p. 131; Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*, ii, p. 207. 84 L. Price, 'A note on the use of the word *baile* in place-names', *Celtica*, 6 (1963), 119–26.

that the word became common in place-names there only after it had been chosen by the Irish as a translation for the *tūn*-generic employed by the Anglo-Norman settlers.⁸⁵ There is, however, some evidence to suggest that Baile had already spread to south-western Scotland by the ninth century⁸⁶ and it is important to realize that in England Nordic personal names were entering into hybrid place-names in English –*tūn* as well as into purely Nordic place-names in Danish –*bý* in large numbers in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The York Vikings at least would have been familiar with such names. I think it likely that the Nordic personal names found in place-names around Dublin would have been borne either by Vikings who had been responsible for supplying the town with the necessities of life in the tenth and eleventh centuries or by their descendants. Ballyfermot west of Dublin (Balithormod *c.* 1260, *villa* Thurmot *c.* 1280) and the lost Ballygunner near Delgany in Co. Wicklow contain the Nordic names Þormóð and Gunnar, and are Irish parallels to Thormanby in Yorkshire and Gunnerby in Lincolnshire. The names of Curtlestown (Baile mhic Thorcaill) near Bray and Balally (Baile meic Amhlaibh 1179) close to the Dublin–Wicklow border both also reflect Norse ownership in the region. John Bradley has noted that the MacTorcaills and the MacAmhlaibhs were active there in the twelfth century.⁸⁷

Waterford, too, had its rural hinterland known as Gaultier (Gaill-tír), ‘land of the Foreigners’, and this name may date from the expulsion of the Ostmen or Vikings from Waterford with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. The presence of earlier Viking settlers here, however, is suggested by the place-names Ballygunner (Baile Mhic Gonair), the settlement of the MacGunnors, and Ballytruckle (Baile Torcail, Ballitrukill in the reign of Elizabeth I).⁸⁸ Patrick Power seemed to think that the personal name involved in Ballytruckle could be Thorgils, Thorkils, Turgesius or Torgeis but while Thorgils, Turgesius and Torgeis are probably all variant spellings of Nordic Þorgísl or Þorgils, it seems clear to me that the personal name lying behind Ballytruckle must be Þorkil, a post-1000 contracted form of Þorketil. Another pointer to a Viking presence in Waterford noted by Power is the dedication to St Olave of one of the churches.

A rather isolated example of the Irish word *baile* compounded with a Nordic personal name is Ballytrustin in Co. Down, which is perhaps an example of a settlement in the rural hinterland of the stronghold or strongholds of the Viking fleet in Strangford Lough. The earliest written record of the name of this parish is as Thurstayniston (*c.* 1306).⁸⁹ In the two earliest forms the generic is English *tūn*. The personal name is clearly Nordic Þorstein and to judge from these forms the metathesis in the first element seems most likely to have taken place in

85 A. Crozier, ‘On the transparency of place-names in Ireland, England and Sweden’, *NORNA-Rapporter*, 34 (1987), 44. 86 W.F.H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish place-names* (new ed. Edinburgh, 2001), pp 159–62. 87 Bradley, ‘Scandinavian settlement’, p. 56. 88 P. Power, *The place-names of Decies* (2nd ed. Cork, 1952), pp 185, 188, 223–5. 89 Stockman, *Place-names of Northern*

Ireland. It is interesting that the form *stein* of the second element has survived in the early forms of this place-name, perhaps reflecting a Norwegian origin. In most forms of *Þorstein* in England *stein* tends to have become *stan*, perhaps under the influence of the cognate Old English element *stān*, while after the arrival of the Normans it tended to become *stin*, perhaps by confusion with the French ending *-in*.

It has been disappointing to me that I did not find more instances of place-names consisting of *baile* plus a Nordic personal name as evidence of the way in which the Vikings organized the hinterlands of such strongholds as Dublin, Waterford and Strangford. There is certainly no evidence here pointing to the seizure of large estates to be broken up into small independent units as a reward for labour and services of the kind that is found in the Danelaw.

One small but significant point about the evidence for Viking influence on the place-names of Ireland was first mentioned by Alf Sommerfelt in connection with the names of three of the provinces of Ireland, Ulster, Leinster and Munster.⁹⁰ He showed that these names were borrowings of nordicized forms of the Irish names Ulaid, Laigin and Mumu, probably in the oblique cases Ulad, Laigen and Muman, with the addition of a Germanic ending *-s* and the Irish word *tír*, 'land', as in Icelandic *Úlástír*.

EPILOGUE: NORDIC INFLUENCE IN THE DUBLIN GUILD MERCHANT ROLL, c. 1190–1265

I had hoped that a study of this fascinating roll would provide a fitting conclusion to my essay but this proved to be a *fata morgana*. The edition produced in 1992 is a useful one⁹¹ and marks a great advance on the nineteenth-century edition of extracts from the roll.⁹² Unfortunately, however, as pointed out by Peter McClure in a fine review,⁹³ the minimalistic editorial commentary in the new edition and the rather inadequate indices, combined with the practice of modernizing and translating occupational terms and place-names, has restricted its value for my purposes. I have, however, noted that personal names of Nordic origin are of particularly frequent occurrence in the undated membranes that may even have pre-dated 1171, when Henry II granted the town to the men of Bristol. It is clear that all the Nordic personal names appear in spellings that would be the normal ones for names that had been taken into use in northern England and survived there until about 1250. There is no sign in the roll of the Nordic names in Irish disguise. This is partly, of course, because the

Ireland, ii, p. 55. 90 A. Sommerfelt, 'The English forms of the main provinces of Ireland', *Lochlann*, 1 (1958), 223–7. 91 *The Dublin guild merchant roll, c. 1190–1265*, ed. P. Connolly and G. Martin (Dublin, 1992). 92 J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Historical and municipal documents of Ireland, 1172–1320* (London, 1870). 93 In *Nomina*, 19 (1996), 61–78.

mercantile classes in Dublin were drawn from all over the British Isles and elsewhere in Europe. Comparatively few merchants are stated to come from Dublin and other places in Ireland. Particularly significant are the merchants who came from Oxmantown, a suburb on the north bank of the Liffey. Tradition claims that the Hiberno-Norse population was expelled from the walled town to develop this new suburb. Its name is recorded in the roll in forms such as *ad pontem Ostmannorum* 19a, *de Oustmantune* 61b, *de Oustman* 65a, *de villa Ostmannorum* 71a, 73a, 74b, 80b, 81b, 82b, 85b, 96b, 115a, 116a, 119a, if the transcription is to be relied upon. There may have been a permanent bridge there serving an earlier settlement.⁹⁴ The latinized form Ostmanni is a corruption of the Nordic word Austmenn, 'men from the east', originally employed by the Icelanders of a 'Norwegian' and specifically of a Norwegian merchant (in Iceland). In Ireland, however, it was used of the invaders or settlers from Denmark and Norway, especially the Northmen or 'Danes' and their descendants who had settled in some of the fortified towns there.

Particularly intriguing are the six references in the roll to the Irish place-name Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath. Early forms of this name such as Domnach-Sechnaill, 'the stone church of St Sechnall' reflect the residence here of the saint until his death in 448, while the first element in the name was later replaced by the element *dún*.⁹⁵ No fewer than six guild members, however, are registered in the period 1235–51 with as their address a form of the name Dunshaughlin in which the first element is replaced by what must be a version of the spelling of the name Dublin that was employed by the Vikings, namely Divelin, Dyvelin, Divelyn (69b, 81a, 81b, 86a, 86b, 90b) and this may reflect some kind of territorial claim.⁹⁶

On the undated, early membranes of the roll, the name Viking as a byname is rather common: for example, Edwardus Wicing 1a, Robertus Wiking 17b, Willelmus Wiking 21a, Elias Wiking 32b. Occasionally men with both Nordic names and a location in Ireland occur here: for example, Aroldus de Wateforde 6a (Waterford), Joli de Wateford 9b, Wiking de Dublin 15b, Torpin de Keneles 16a (Kells), Hamundus de Lochsiuehi 24a (Loughsewdy, Co. Westmeath), Dolfinus de Cracfergus 31b (Carrickfergus), Lacheman de Arglas 36b (Ardglass, Co. Cork or Co. Down). Without localization, however, it is impossible to claim all the Nordic personal names and bynames such as Utlag, 'outlaw' 5b, 6a, Unnithing, an anglicized negative form of Old Norse *níðing*, 'dastard' 22a, as being evidence of Viking influence in Ireland, except of course in so far as the development of Dublin as an important international trading post in many respects reflects that of that other famous Viking city, York.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin*, pp 25–6. ⁹⁵ Joyce, *Irish names of places*, p. 318.

⁹⁶ Suggested to me tentatively by Howard Clarke. ⁹⁷ I am very grateful to Howard Clarke and Ruth Johnson for inviting me to contribute to this volume and giving me much good advice and practical assistance. To my former colleague Peder Gammeltoft I am indebted for reading my text and making some useful comments on it.

Costumes and contact: evidence for Scandinavian women in the Irish Sea region

CHRISTINA LEE

This essay considers what kinds of evidence may indicate the presence of Scandinavian women across the Irish Sea region in the Viking Age. It deals with textiles, but also with burial and costume in relation to identity and migration. While the Viking migrations to the British Isles and Ireland have been widely studied in the last decade, the term ‘Viking’ is still highly contested, since its present use goes largely back to a nineteenth-century understanding. Some scholars have gone as far as to claim that the term is wholly inappropriate, since it suggests that the Vikings were a homogenous people.¹

Since much of this essay considers the involvement of Viking women in parts of the Irish Sea region, it seems prudent to offer a definition first. The first thing that needs defining is what we mean by ‘Viking women’? Do we mean ‘women of the Viking Age’, or do we mean ‘women who are Vikings’? While the first is possible, the second – at least linguistically – is not. Technically, the Old Norse term *vikingr* is masculine.² This word, as Judith Jesch states, is used for persons in runic and skaldic sources, as well as occasionally in personal names. Jesch notes that there is a feminine noun *viking* that is used in the late *Eddic* poem *Helreið Brynhildar*, where the heroine Brynhildr on her way to *hel* tells a giantess that she went on Viking expeditions. The feminine noun is also used in three runic inscriptions from Denmark and Sweden, which all refer to Viking voyages. Perhaps we should consider that the term *viking* in the medieval context applies only to those who left the homelands for raids or expeditions.

Were women part of these enterprises and can we therefore talk of Viking women in this context? There is a range of evidence that suggests that Scandinavian women played a part in the movements of Vikings in the Irish Sea region in the period 850–1100. This is a time of many changes, away from the initial raids to settlement and the creation of hybrid cultures, as exemplified in urban centres such as Dublin in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Much has been said about male participation in trade, politics and warfare in this region, but the

1 F. Svanberg, *Decolonizing the Viking Age*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 2003). 2 C. Fell, ‘Modern English “Viking”’, *Leeds Studies in English*, 18 (1987), 111–23; J. Jesch, ‘Old Norse *vikingr*: a question of contexts’ in C. Hough and K.A. Lowe (eds), ‘*Lastworda betst*: essays in memory of Christine E. Fell, with her unpublished writings’ (Donington, 2002), pp 107–21.

involvement of Scandinavian women in these enterprises has been studied only recently. This essay will look at potential sources of evidence that may open avenues in which female migration to the Irish Sea region may be examined. Significant examples of Scandinavian women around the Irish Sea region come from Ireland, the Isle of Man, the north-west of England, western Scotland and especially the Hebrides. While there are similarities, we find subtle differences as well that indicate that female migration to the Irish Sea region was as complex as that of the men who moved around this region.

VIKING IDENTITIES

There is now increasing archaeological evidence for widespread Viking activity in Ireland, but the question of who exactly these people were is more complex than ever. Genetic evidence for Scandinavian patrilineal ancestry for modern men with putative ‘Norse’ surnames is scarce.³ Of course, modern genetic research can tell us only about the ancestors that procreated. Those who had no children or who had only daughters are not represented in the Y-chromosome analyses and, given that between us and the Vikings are centuries of disease, conflict, famine and large-scale migrations, current numbers may be misleading.⁴ Even so, it is possible that some ‘Vikings’ in Ireland may have been polyethnic from the outset. There is a range of different names that were given to people with Scandinavian associations and there have been excellent evaluations of the linguistic evidence,⁵ which have suggested that there may be a distinction of different groups. Whether these were ethnic labels or were given to different warbands operating from a range of bases across the Irish Sea is an important distinction. There is a possibility that these groups included a mix of Norse and Celtic people who on the surface adopted a ‘Viking’ identity but communicated in Gaelic. One such group that operated across the Irish Sea region were the ‘foreign Gaels’ (Gallgoidil). These have been identified by Arne Kruse and Andrew Jennings as a mixed group of Gaelic-speaking Gaels who joined

3 B. McEvoy et al., ‘The scale and nature of Viking settlement in Ireland from Y-chromosome admixture analysis’, *European Journal of Human Genetics*, 14 (2006), 1288–94. The genetic legacy has been the subject of an IRCHSS/AHRC-funded research network led by Cathy Swift (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick) and me (University of Nottingham), ‘Genes of the Gaillgoidil’ at www.vikingage.mic.ul.ie/ (accessed 2 July 2012). 4 Modern outcomes are generally created by looking at admixtures: Population A and Population B of modern countries are supposed to be different and admixtures look at the percentage of similarities in between. 5 C. Etchingham, ‘*Laithlinn*, “Fair Foreigners” and “Dark Foreigners”: the identity and provenance of Vikings in ninth-century Ireland’ in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 80–8; C. Downham, ‘Viking identities in Ireland: it’s not all black and white’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2009* (Dublin, 2011), pp 185–201.

Scandinavian warbands originating in the area of Dál Riata.⁶ The question of who should be labelled a Viking in the Irish Sea region is therefore complex indeed.

Viking-Age Ireland is often studied as a society of two halves where the Scandinavian incomers live side-by-side with the Irish natives as a clearly distinguished group.⁷ Dublin was a hybrid town of Irish and Vikings by the tenth century and continued to be so for some time.⁸ Nevertheless, the distinction of the Norse as a separate group continued well into the medieval period.⁹ Whether those who continued to live a Viking identity in Dublin or Waterford were ethnically Scandinavian may not be easily identifiable, but it is important to understand that cultural traits were preserved over a long time, though not always as a slavish imitation of those in the homelands. The settlers in Ireland developed, for example, a distinctive material culture¹⁰ and the question remains whether Scandinavian women were part of such 'identity-creating' communities.

We have a variety of archaeological evidence that indicates that Scandinavian women were also part of the migrants who settled around the Irish Sea rim. The Hebrides were given the name *Inse Gall*, 'islands of the Foreigners' in Gaelic and they played a significant part in the politics of the Irish Sea region. It is quite obvious that among those Foreigners were also women who, if not ethnic Scandinavians, adopted a Viking identity. Their Scandinavian identity is often indicated by grave-goods, such as the oval brooches found at Valtos in Lewis or Finglas in Dublin.¹¹ We should note, however, that not all female migrants were buried in the same way. 'Pagan' burials are often furnished and give us an idea of the dress style. Metal-replaced scraps can also give us information about the fibres, weaving style and possible origin of the item. By contrast, Christian burials are generally not furnished and other indicators of Scandinavian heritage must be sought.

Elite burial continued to distinguish the dead, whether by elaborate covers or by memorial inscriptions, and sometimes both. For example, there is an inscription at Kilbar on the Isle of Barra that commemorates Thorgerd, daughter of Steinar.¹²

6 A. Jennings and A. Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to Gall-Ghàidheil', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 5 (2009), 123–49. 7 H.B. Clarke, *Dublin, part I, to 1610* (Dublin, 2002), p. 31. See also C. Downham, 'Living on the edge: Scandinavian Dublin in the twelfth century' in B. Ballin Smith et al. (eds), *West over sea: studies in Scandinavian sea-borne expansion and settlement before 1300* (Leiden, 2007), pp 33–52. 8 D. Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the ninth century', *Peritia*, 12 (1998), 296–339; Downham, 'Living on the edge'. 9 E. Purcell, 'The expulsion of the Ostmen, 1169–71: the documentary evidence', *Peritia*, 17 (2003), 276–94. One may also consider that the taxation of the *Lebor na cert* (Book of rights), which states a higher taxation for Scandinavia-derived populations, at www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T102900/index.html (accessed 26 June 2012). I should like to thank Colmán Etchingham for this remark. 10 P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeological identity of the Hiberno-Norse town', *JRSAL*, 122 (1992), 35–66. 11 R. Welander et al., 'A Viking burial from Kneep, Uig, Isle of Lewis', *PSAS*, 117 (1987), 149–74; M. Sikora, 'The Finglas burial: archaeology and ethnicity in Viking-Age Dublin' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 402–17. 12 J. Graham-Campbell and C.E. Batey, *Vikings in Scotland: an archaeological*

The cross-slab that commemorates her name shares some stylistic parallels with the cross on the Isle of Man, which may be an indicator of important connections across the Irish Sea.¹³ Thorgerd may have been a 'trailblazer' as Lesley Abrams suggests – an early convert of her people that may have been a significant step towards hybridization – adopting a way of life in her new land.¹⁴ Her burial is surely innovative and occurred not long after one of her kin had been laid out with traditional grave-goods such as oval brooches, not far from Kilbar at Ardvonrig near Borve on Barra.¹⁵ Among other goods this woman was given a ringed pin – a ubiquitous ornament throughout the Viking world and one that was developed as a result of contact in the Irish Sea region.¹⁶

We do not have any information whether these women grew up in the Scandinavian homelands or whether their life was already one of transition. Whereas Thorgerd's burial embraces the ways of the new lands, the woman at Ardvonrig continued as a memory of the Scandinavian homelands. The choice of Scandinavian burial options that we can observe across the Irish Sea region indicates shifting identities, but what many of these have in common is a continuation of space.¹⁷ The range of female burials in the Irish Sea region seems to occur in important places, chosen carefully to signify a continuation between old and new.

In contrast to these Scandinavian incomers, the role of Irish women in the Viking Age has been studied largely as one of involuntary trafficking. This view may be supported by the quite extensive genetic Celtic fingerprint across the north Atlantic, especially in the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) of modern Icelanders that is inherited by daughters from their mothers. It appears that up to 58 per cent of modern Icelandic women have Gaelic female ancestors.¹⁸ While slave raiding was certainly a part of Viking activities in Ireland, not all relations may have ended in slavery. One may think of Gormlaith, the queen of both Amlaíb Cuarán and Brian Bórama.¹⁹ It is clear that intermarriage with Irish royal ladies supported a range of shifting alliances.

survey (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 83. ¹³ Ibid. ¹⁴ L. Abrams, 'Conversion and the church in the Hebrides in the Viking Age: "A very difficult thing indeed"' in Ballin Smith et al. (eds), *West over sea*, p. 189. ¹⁵ Site report file at <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/9715/details/barra+borve/> (accessed 3 July 2012). ¹⁶ Welander et al., 'Viking burial from Kneep', 170. ¹⁷ See also S.H. Harrison, 'The Suffolk Street sword: further notes on the College Green cemetery, Dublin' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 136–44, esp. p. 141, who shows that at least 20% of Viking burial sites occur in places of previous occupation. There are other burials such as, for example, at Balladoole (Isle of Man) and Repton (Derbyshire) where existing burial grounds were appropriated for elite burial. ¹⁸ A. Helgason et al., 'mtDNA and the islands of the north Atlantic: estimating the proportions of Norse and Gaelic ancestry', *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 68:3 (2001), 723–37. ¹⁹ S. Lewis-Simpson, 'Viking queens and the formation of identity' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 217–26.

DRESS AND IDENTITY

While written sources tell us about Viking men and the occasional Irish royal lady who was married to them, we hear less about female settlers from Scandinavia. There is, as seen above, a range of archaeological evidence that suggests the presence of Scandinavian women. While objects are not necessarily an indication of ethnicity, manufacture is usually something that is traded from one generation to the next and I should like to pay special attention to the making of textiles, a craft that according to grave finds and written sources was a female occupation.²⁰

Most of the textiles found around the Irish Sea region come from rich inhumation burials. These graves may be exceptional rather than being the norm, and as members of leading families those within them may have been buried with exceptional items that may not only link to their ethnic identity, but also commemorate political status as chieftains and wives of chieftains. Most recreations of 'Norse dress' are based on evidence found in graves, which poses the question of whether funerary clothes were indeed the same as those of living populations. Most of the graves found in the British Isles come from rural environments and the dress ornaments found in them may have been quite different from those of urban populations.

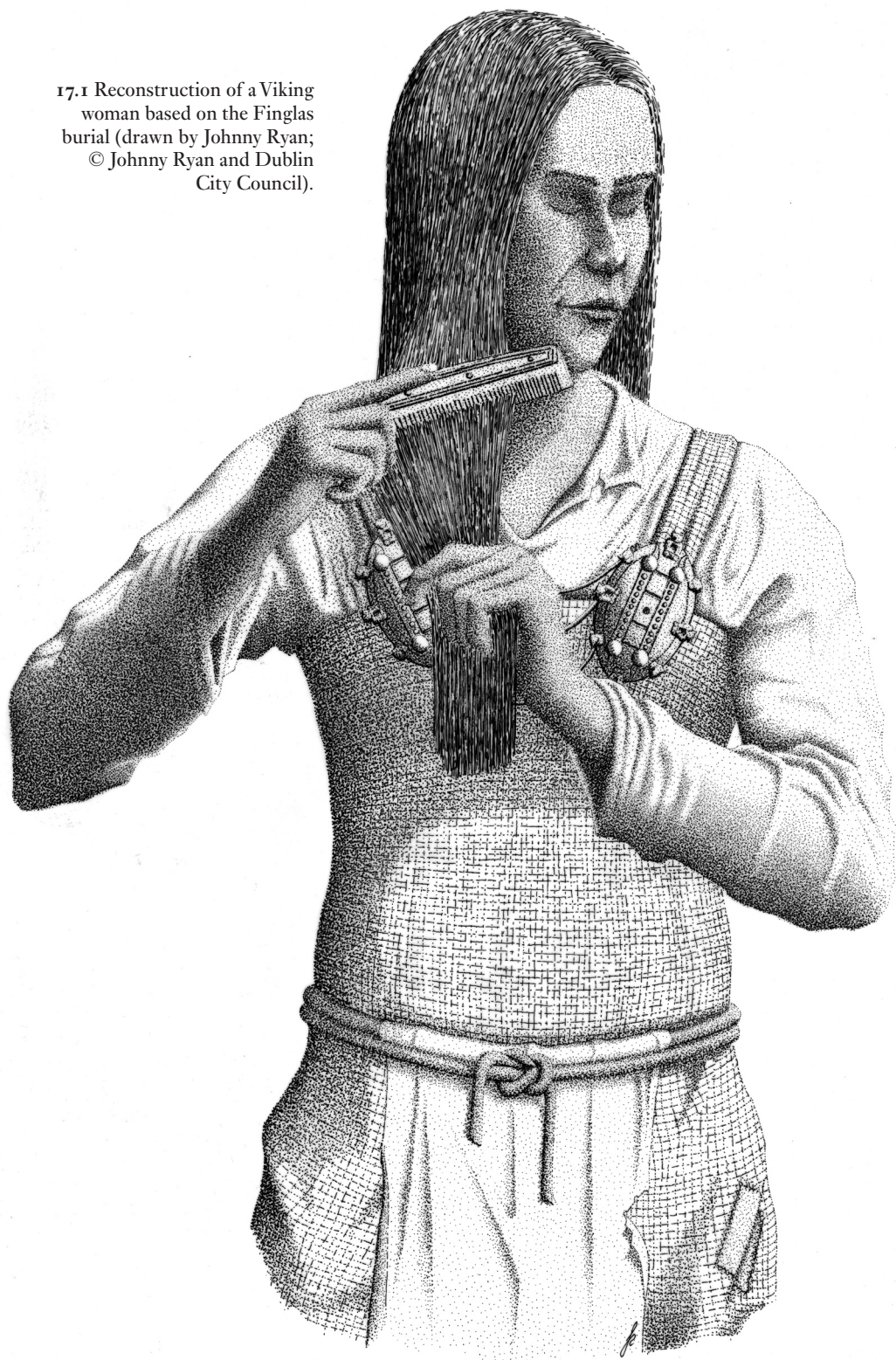
Costume historians claim that the dress of Viking women was conservative. Most agree that it derived from a standard Germanic peplos dress, such as that worn by the bog-body found at Huldremose in Denmark, which developed into a pinafore-style dress worn with two oval brooches across the chest. This textbook Viking dress is based on Agnes Geijer's reconstruction of textile fragments and dress fasteners found in the Viking-Age cemetery at Birka in Sweden.²¹ This dress consists of a long linen underdress (sometimes pleated) with a pinafore-style overdress fastened by oval brooches. The reconstruction was made on the basis of only 5 per cent of the textiles recovered from this site and Geijer herself regarded her reconstruction only as a suggestion.²² Nevertheless, the dress, as Eva Andersson Strand has pointed out, was understood to be a parallel of 'folk costume' by scholars²³ and has often been seen as the typical Viking dress.²⁴

The work of subsequent textile historians such as Inga Hägg and Eva Andersson has shown much larger varieties in both the fabrics and the fasteners in the homelands.²⁵ Thus, the famous pinafore dress fastened with oval brooches

20 I. Oye, 'Women in early towns' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 298–308.

21 A. Geijer, *Birka III: Die Textilfunde aus den Gräbern* (Stockholm, 1938). 22 E. Andersson, *Textilproduktion i arkeologiska kontext, en metodstudie av yngre järnåldersboplatser i Skåne* (Lund, 1996), nos 58, 139. 23 Ibid., no. 136. 24 Ibid., no. 140. 25 See also the work of Søren Sindbæk, who looked at networks and different sites of manufacture ('Urban crafts and oval brooches style: innovation and social networks in Viking-Age towns' in S. Sigmundsson et al. (eds), *Viking settlements and Viking society: papers from the proceedings of the Sixteenth Viking Congress, Reykjavík and Reykholt, 16–23 August 2009* (Reykjavík, 2011), pp 407–21).

17.1 Reconstruction of a Viking
woman based on the Finglas
burial (drawn by Johnny Ryan;
© Johnny Ryan and Dublin
City Council).



was already old-fashioned in Denmark when many of the Scandinavian settlers left the homeland. Far fewer oval brooches have been recovered from Denmark than from Norway or Sweden. Most of these are from a ninth-century context and are found in the eastern parts of the country, which is closest to Sweden. At the cemetery of Birka, however, almost every female grave contained oval brooches. The fabric remains on the backs fastened anything from a poor woman's coarse wool to a wealthy lady's silk imported from the Orient.

From the widespread use of oval brooches around the Irish Sea region, it appears that at least in death high-ranking women continued to be buried in the fashion of their Norse ancestors. Graves such as those at Cruach Mhor on Islay or Cumwhitton in Cumbria or Finglas in Co. Dublin each contained a pair of oval brooches (fig. 17.1).²⁶ Nevertheless in those parts of eastern and midland England that were settled by Scandinavians, and that are commonly called the Danelaw, people seem to have preferred ringed pins or Irish-influenced penannular brooches, and no brooches have been found with female burials on the Isle of Man. It is clear that 'Viking' women in the British Isles used a range of different dress styles.

While the oval brooches of the Ardvonrig burial correspond to several other finds from the Irish Sea region, not everyone came to be buried in the clothes of the homelands. The so-called 'pagan lady of Peel' burial of a woman from the Isle of Man contains no brooches, which has led scholars to assume that she was not buried in Scandinavian dress.²⁷ Would such an option be a personal choice, or would the burial of the 'trailblazing' Thorgerd indicate a growing assimilation? If burial dress and ornaments are understood as markers of identity, then the lady of Peel seems to connect the old and the new.

FABRIC STYLES

In most cases we no longer find the actual fabric, but imprints of textile in the metal that occurred during corrosion or fabrics that have been metal-replaced. The imprints found on the back of brooches were not always part of the clothing worn by the deceased, but may have occurred during the manufacturing process. Clay-impregnated cloth was used to separate the bronze cast from the mould. When the hot metal was poured into the mould, the textile would disintegrate yet leave an imprint. In some cases the textile used for such work is very fine, such as the herringbone twill on the brooch found at Chaipaval on Harris.

Nevertheless, a comparison of textiles from Scandinavian Scotland with those from other areas of the British Isles and Scandinavia does produce some results.

²⁶ As did the burial of Adwick le Street, south Yorkshire, which is one of the rare locations where such brooches were found in England (G. Speed and P. Walton Rogers, 'A burial of a Viking woman at Adwick le Street, south Yorkshire', *Medieval Archaeology*, 48 (2004), 51–90).

²⁷ Campbell and Batey, *Vikings in Scotland*, p. 111.

'Veka-style twill', which is a four-shed twill (a repeat of two yarns over and two under the weft) made from tightly Z-spun medium wool, is assumed to be native to western Norway, but was found with one male burial at Kildonan on Eigg in the Inner Hebrides.²⁸ This type of twill is unknown in Scotland before the ninth century.²⁹ The imprint on the belt-buckle at Kneep is a variant of broken-diamond twill (where the weaving forms a diamond pattern on the fabric) that is also found in Dublin and Waterford as well as at Kneep on Lewis and Orphir in Orkney. This type has many analogues in twills found at the Birka cemetery.³⁰ These textiles were most likely imported and it is interesting to note that the brooches of the woman at Kneep also have parallels in Birka graves.³¹ This does not necessarily mean that these items were made in Sweden, especially since Andersson Strand has demonstrated that the tools found at Birka were not suitable for producing such homogenized cloths,³² but that they were made in workshops that were part of the urban networks developing during the Viking Age.³³

The textiles on the Kneep brooch are from about three to four different fabrics. Aside from the twill, there is a fine linen fabric and a wool tabby (a fabric where the yarn is alternatively taken over and under the weft). This type of fabric, according to the specialist commenting on the Kneep textiles Lise Bender Jørgensen, is common in Viking-Age Scandinavia, but commoner in Denmark (75 per cent) than in western Norway (40 per cent).³⁴ This distribution stands in contrast to the imprint of the twill from the belt-buckle, which has a significant spread in western Norway, but less dense in Denmark and eastern Scandinavia.³⁵ The presence of a belt is different from the usually loose Viking dress and belts have a male bias.³⁶ What is interesting about this woman is that, although she wears objects that give her a Scandinavian identity, these were not made in one place and her assemblage shows that her attire was bought rather than made by herself. She may even have bought it herself as a woman of means and she adapted her dress with a belt, perhaps to mark changes. Belts were worn by Anglo-Saxon women and perhaps this woman's dress emulates fashions from much farther afield in the Viking diaspora.

It is not only dress styles that were adopted, but also techniques show forms of hybridization. And here it is interesting to note that some of them may have come from contacts in the Irish Sea region. Icelandic *vaðmal*, a water-repellent textile made out of wool that was produced from the eleventh century onwards,

²⁸ P. Henry, 'Changing weaving styles and fabric types: the Scandinavian influence' in J. Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home: proceedings of a conference on Viking-period settlement, at Cardiff, July 2001* (Leeds, 2004), p. 446. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 452. ³⁰ *Ibid.* ³¹ C. Batey in Welander et al., 'Viking burial from Kneep', 169. ³² E. Andersson Strand, 'Tools and textiles: production and organisation in Birka and Hedeby' in Sigmundsson et al. (eds), *Viking settlements*, p. 13. ³³ Sindbæk, 'Urban crafts', p. 417. ³⁴ L. Bender Jørgensen in Welander et al., 'Viking burial from Kneep', 166. ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 168. ³⁶ Batey in Welander et al., 'Viking burial from Kneep', 170.

was used as currency across the Viking world. Here the yarns are Z-spun in one system and S-spun in the other, with coarser wool in the weft. By using different wools and spinning, the fabric can more easily be fulled and therefore water-proofed. It seems that this quintessential Icelandic fabric may have had its origin around the Irish Sea, since earlier examples of this technique were found in Shetland, Waterford and York.³⁷ Z-spun and S-spun fabrics have a strong English and continental bias, and we may be looking at some form of cross-cultural hybridization.³⁸

Piled fabrics (those in which additional tufts of wool were added during the weaving stage) were produced in Scandinavia and Ireland. The appearance of such fabric is 'shaggy' and produces a material that is lightweight and yet semi-waterproof. Irish and Icelandic examples were dyed, but all examples from Scotland and the Isle of Man are undyed.³⁹ At the sword burial of Cronk Moar, Jurby, on the Isle of Man the technique has been amended: here the pile is fastened down to the fabric by darning, giving it a soft appearance. The wool for the cloak has come from local sheep. Osteological analysis has shown that the breeds on the Isle of Man varied little between the Viking Age and today, and we can therefore pinpoint the origin of the wool. To me this is a much more conclusive argument for the origin of a textile than a comparison of weave types alone. The distinctiveness of this Isle of Man textile may be noted in connection with other evidence, such as Hiberno-Norse hybrid styles of decoration on stone sculptures, or the evidence from the Bride and Braddan runic inscriptions that suggest Norse-Celtic hybridization. It may even be possible that textiles are 'gendered'. The association of male or female burial is usually made on the basis of grave-goods, which is problematic in itself. All instances of piled fabrics, however, have been found with 'male' burials. The majority of those are found in connection with weapons that, like their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, may have been wrapped for burial. In England 'piled' fabric was discovered in remains from Anglo-Scandinavian York. It appears, however, that the maker was not quite sure about the technique, since here the tufts have been laboriously sewn into the fabric, rather than being woven therein. This may represent an imitation of an Irish Sea fabric.⁴⁰

Generally the York textiles have a much more 'English appearance',⁴¹ which may indicate that Viking weavers catered for local tastes. York is an interesting find-spot, since we have evidence for eastern Scandinavian imports as well, such as honeycomb twills, as well as nålebinding – a form of crocheting that developed in Sweden.⁴² Nålebinding is virtually unknown outside Scandinavia; one example exists from York and another from Dublin.⁴³ This may suggest that

37 Henry, 'Changing weaving styles', p. 448. 38 Ibid., pp 452–3. 39 Speed and Walton Rogers, 'Burial of a Viking woman'. 40 Henry, 'Changing weaving styles', p. 451. 41 P. Walton Rogers, *Textile production at 16–22 Coppergate: Saxon or Viking?* (York, 1997), p. 64. 42 I thank Elizabeth Coatsworth for access to the database of the Manchester Medieval Textiles Project. 43 Henry, 'Changing weaving styles', p. 451.

a group of highly skilled textile specialists, perhaps even émigrés of eastern Scandinavian origin, were resident in Viking-Age towns. If women artisans travelled to urban centres, would they have also settled in rural areas, perhaps in regions where flax could more easily be grown, as in Scotland and Ireland? Is it possible to regard at least some of the bodies found with textile tools from Irish Sea contexts as having been either artisans or sponsors of textile production?

TOOLS, TRADE AND FEMALE ECONOMIES

It is interesting that the burial of the woman from Ardvonrig contained a weaving sword, adapted from an actual weapon and deposited in her grave. Such items were used to push the threads upwards on the vertical loom. Textile tools appear frequently in burials, often as loom weights, but weaving swords are relatively rare. There is another putative find of a weaving batten from Cruach Mhor, Islay.⁴⁴ Textile tool finds are not restricted to the Irish Sea region, as evidenced by weaving battens found with female burials in Orkney, such as the Westness burial on Rousay,⁴⁵ or by the elaborate whalebone plaque, shears and spindle whorl at the multiple inhumation at Scar, Sanday.⁴⁶ A spindle whorl and ringed pin were found as far away as the Viking settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland.

We do not often discuss women as contributors to the economies of the past. Manufacturing is still regarded as a male occupation, but there are areas in which we can look for female migration. Textile work in the Viking Age was female work and the tools found in graves tell us something about women's involvement in this trade. Most Viking-Age textiles would have been produced at home or by specialists on large farms, since textile work is labour-intensive and requires a measure of skill and specialization. The twelve ells of yarn that the heroine of *Laxdæla saga*, Guðrun, produces in one morning may be an exaggeration, but it takes 2.5kg of wool to produce the most basic female dress and 3.5kg to make a man's costume.⁴⁷ The production of the most basic male and female costume requires around eight hundred hours of labour from a spinner.⁴⁸ Such domestic production, however, pales into insignificance if we consider that about two thousand fleeces were needed to produce a sail for a Viking ship.⁴⁹ In the homelands, urban centres such as Hedeby and Birka had areas of textile production.⁵⁰ One sheep produces around 2kg of wool per annum, though this

44 K. Gordon, 'A Norse Viking-Age grave from Cruach Mhor, Islay', *PSAS*, 120 (1990), 158.

45 Site record at <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/2204/details/rousay+westness/> (accessed 10 July 2012).

46 Site report at <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/3494/details/sanday+quoy+banks/> (accessed 10 July 2012).

47 Andersson Strand, 'Tools and textiles', p. 2. 48 Ibid. 49 E. Wincott Heckett, 'Textiles that work for their living: a late eleventh-century cloth from Cork, Ireland' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, p. 558.

This labour was undertaken by women. 50 Andersson Strand, 'Tools and textiles', p. 15.

amount must have been less in the Viking Age, since sheep were not always shorn, but sometimes the wool was plucked off the sheep when they were moulting. This may have resulted in the introduction of different breeds of animal, such as long-haired sheep, and future work on migration should bear in mind that certain species may have been introduced into an area by immigrants who were involved in textile production.

Flax is an even more labour-intensive material. The plant favours damp conditions. Flax is demanding on the soil, but grows best in light sandy soils, free from heavy frosts – a quality that most of the islands around the Irish Sea possess. The raw fibre has to be retted in standing water for the fibres to break down before it can be used for spinning. Flax has to be spun in humid conditions, preferably inside a building, otherwise the yarn will break. It is clear that such a time- and labour-consuming fibre can be produced only by settlers who are no longer on the move. In the Western Isles flax was introduced with the Vikings,⁵¹ and we should consider whether places such as the Uists were chosen because they allowed for ready growth of this material. The production and export of flax in these places may have facilitated the development of a micro-economy.

Analyses of wool have shown that the fleece type and colour differed between the Viking-settled areas of Britain and Ireland. Sheep in Scotland had a full range of colours, from black, brown, grey to white; Irish sheep were usually brown, but English sheep were white.⁵² The use of different types of wool, as well as yarns spun in different directions,⁵³ can produce a patterned effect that precludes the laborious work of dyeing. The production of yarn is labour-intensive and it has been estimated that to produce enough bedding, clothing and other household goods, a Viking woman would have had to work at least eight hundred hours a year on textile production.⁵⁴ We need to consider where this wool came from. Would women rear their own supplies or trade raw ingredients? Towns in particular would have had little space for flocks of sheep or retting pools for linen. There is increasing evidence that textiles, and especially fine fabrics, were produced in manufacturing centres in towns.⁵⁵ These were professional workshops in which women would have worked full time as specialists.⁵⁶ Excavations of towns such as Birka and Hedeby have shown a great variety of spindle whorls that can produce a range of different yarns. By the eleventh century other Scandinavian towns, such as Oslo and Bryggen, also had a growing textile industry in which a variety of women were involved.⁵⁷ While a

51 M. Parker Pearson et al., 'Cille Phedair: the life and times of a Norse period farmstead' in Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home*, p. 252. 52 Henry, 'Changing weaving styles', p. 445.

53 Wool is spun either clockwise (so-called Z-spinning) or anti-clockwise (S-spinning).

54 E. Andersson Strand, 'Textile production in Scandinavia' in L. Bender Jørgensen and J. Banck-Burgess (eds), *Textilien aus Archäologie und Geschichte: Festschrift für Klaus Tidow* (Neumünster, 2003), p. 48. 55 Andersson Strand, 'Tools and textiles', pp 4–5. 56 Ibid., p. 3.

57 Øye, 'Women in early towns'.

certain amount of material would still have been produced at home, high-status households would have contained imported textiles. Future research should consider textiles as one of the commodities of trade.

Imported textiles tell us about connections across the Irish Sea. A tenth-century silk cap found at Coppergate, York, appears to have been cut from the same cloth as a cap found in Lincoln.⁵⁸ The examples of silk and wool caps excavated from Viking-Age Dublin, Lincoln and York all share a number of similarities, including the width of the cloth (which in some cases has been selvaged to fit) and technique. Most are fashioned in Z-spun/no twist patterns and, while head-coverings were ubiquitous among early medieval women, the similarities of the head-coverings from Viking-Age towns in the British Isles and Ireland suggest that they were worn by a particular class of woman. Elizabeth Wincott Heckett observes that on at least one occasion the fine silk cloth of a cap was reused to make a child's head-covering,⁵⁹ which suggests that these artefacts were not age-related. Dublin and York had close political connections and such imported items may not be 'ethnic' markers, but rather ones that female merchants could easily buy or sell in markets. The trading connections of Viking merchants to other areas of the Viking world may mean that women married to Scandinavians had easy access to expensive materials. While this does not exclude 'Irish' women, it should be noted that the Munster tract *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* describes the spoils that Brian Bórama and his men take from the Foreigners as 'beautifully woven cloth of all colours and of all kinds; their satins and silken cloth ... both scarlet and green ...'.⁶⁰ The text further describes the young women who were captured by Brian's army to be gang-raped by them as 'silk-clad'.⁶¹

CONCLUSION

Of all the evidence for material culture, textiles may provide us with a unique window of forms of female economic activity in the past. Culturally, they may show how Norse settlers reacted to their new environments, whether they integrated into other cultures or remained separate. Textiles may tell us when such distinctiveness was desired and who adopted it, and quintessentially they may tell us when ties to the Viking diaspora gave way to assimilation by becoming Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Norwegian or English. Texts present us with various Viking groups who operated across the Irish Sea, but it is the dress choice for female burials that seems to remain conservative. Such choices may represent the ongoing memory of the homelands, a memory that forged and reformed

⁵⁸ E. Wincott Heckett, *Viking-Age headcoverings from Dublin* (Dublin, 2003), p. 52. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47. ⁶⁰ CGG, pp 78–9. ⁶¹ *Ibid.* I should like to thank Cathy Swift for checking the Old Irish term for me.

Viking identities in this region. The apparent conservatism, however, is contrasted with technical innovation, which has its roots in the Irish Sea region and which also indicates an influence of Irish women on the making of cloth. This may have been the result of familial contacts or a gradual assimilation to the new environment.

Textiles also tell us about networks of trade. The existence of Scandinavian craftswomen in some urban centres may even point to a uniquely female motivation for migration. The textile tools found with high-ranking women may indicate a woman's role in the production or even in the control of such an industry, rather than notions of religion or belief that have been readily attributed to such objects on the basis of mythologies recorded much later. The differences in fabric at the various burials around the Irish Sea region need comparison, in the same way that brooches and pins have been compared, and the notion that textile tools represent some kind of 'domestic kit' needs re-evaluating. Textiles signify a special identity for women in the diaspora – culturally Norse, but with experience of far-flung travels. The Westness woman with her Norse and Celtic brooches, her textile tools and her Anglo-Saxon mount shows the insignia of the successful immigrant: she had become rich in the new land, straddling the old life and the new.⁶²

62 Parts of this essay were given as an opening lecture for the Midlands Viking Symposium held in 2011 at the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. I am grateful to the then director of the museum, Patrick Wallace, for his support. I should also like to thank my co-organizer, Ruth Johnson (Dublin City Council), for bringing this event to Ireland. The symposium was part of a joint research project on Viking-Age Ireland between Catherine Swift (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick) and me. The resulting collaboration, including this volume of essays, has been immensely fruitful and I wish to place on record the support of our sponsors, the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The environment of Viking-Age settlements: recent evidence from Ireland to Russia

EILEEN REILLY

Archaeological excavations across Europe have revealed spectacular evidence of the streetscapes of Viking-Age settlements, from houses and refuse pits to workshops and animal pens. With environmental analyses of plant remains, animal and fish bone, insects and wood comes a greater understanding of the contemporary economy and environment of these settlements, from street to landscape scale. This essay presents an overview of environmental evidence from Viking-Age settlements in Ireland, England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Russia. A particular emphasis is placed on results from insect analysis, which provide a rich source of evidence of both living conditions within settlements and wider hinterland interactions.

During the Viking Age, Europe witnessed a large expansion in urban settlement, from the foundation of new settlements to the expansion of pre-existing ones.¹ 'Towns', in one form or another, had existed in parts of northern Europe since Roman times;² however, the Vikings can certainly be credited with bringing notions of 'trading centres' to parts of Europe that had not seen this type of settlement before. This probably includes Ireland, although recent archaeological evidence shows the presence of large mixed settlement/industrial/ecclesiastical centres from the early medieval period onwards.³ Concentrations of population in large settlements brought with them increased impact on the natural environment through demands for food, building materials, craft production and waste management.⁴ All of these elements have left imprints in the archaeological record that have come to light through the excavation of large parts of Europe's significant Viking-Age towns and rural settlements. Analysis of ecofacts – wood, plant macrofossils, bone, insects, shell

1 P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Ireland's Viking-Age towns' in *NHI*, i, pp 815–16.

2 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Place-names as evidence for urban settlements in Britain in the Viking period' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 89–96. 3 T. Kerr et al. (eds), *Early medieval dwellings and settlements in Ireland, AD400–1100* (Dublin, 2009), at www.emap.ie/documents/EMAP_Report_3.2_WEB.pdf. Sites such as Raystown (p. 516), Killickaweeney (p. 326) and Johnstown (p. 484) appear to have had multiple functions, including specialist craft production, which have parallels with early Viking trading centres. 4 S. Geraghty, *Viking Dublin: botanical evidence from Fishamble Street* (Dublin, 1996), pp 66–71.



18.1 Map of northern Europe showing the location of settlements discussed in the text (prepared by Johnny Ryan, background mapping courtesy of Google maps).

and other microfossils – has improved our understanding of what it was like to live in these settlements and how they impacted on the wider environment. This essay will present a brief overview of some of this evidence from Viking-Age settlements across northern Europe, with a particular focus on Irish Viking-Age towns (fig. 18.1). It will examine overlaps and contrasts in living conditions within and between the settlements and glimpses of wider hinterland interactions.

The sources used in this essay are mainly derived from published papers, book chapters and monographs. Unpublished or ‘grey literature’ sources were also accessed, although this is by no means an exhaustive review of these sources. The environmental evidence discussed includes plant macrofossils, wood, animal

bone, insects, shell and, where available, microfossils such as pollen and diatoms. Environmental analysis has varied across the sites chosen for discussion, with few of them being the subject of detailed multidisciplinary analysis. In some cases, multiple strands of evidence do exist, but relate to different phases of excavation, or were recovered using different sampling methods. Nevertheless, though necessarily broad-brush and selective, this review of existing data from key Viking-Age settlements provides important insights into local site economy and environment in addition to wider landscape changes. The period covered by this essay is the mid-eighth to the early twelfth century.

IRELAND

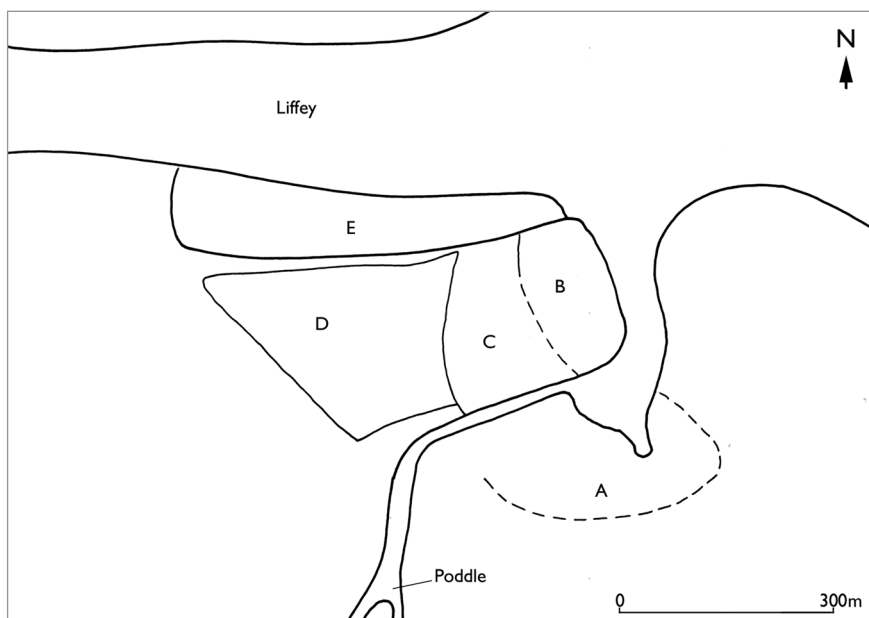
The cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford and other Irish towns, such as Wexford, Arklow, Youghal and Kinsale, can all claim some Viking heritage.⁵ In recent times, the archaeological evidence for Viking-Age occupation of Wexford and Cork has come to light.⁶ Arguably the most extensive evidence of such occupation is to be found in Dublin and Waterford.

Dublin

In the case of Dublin, evidence of the first Viking raids in the mid-ninth century and the possible site of the long speculated-upon *longphort* have been brought to light (fig. 18.2). Excavations at South Great George's Street have revealed burials of Viking warriors and evidence for very early settlement, dating from the early ninth century, straddling the shore of the pool at the mouth of the River Poddle.⁷ Isotopic analysis indicates that two of the buried men were from Scandinavia, while the other two were from somewhere else in Britain or Ireland, possibly Scotland. The site on South Great George's Street is close to the large early Christian enclosure and the cemetery at the church of St Michael le Pole, which may have been the site of the original Duiblinn monastic settlement, said in the annals to have been occupied by the Vikings on their initial raids up the Liffey.⁸ Environmental evidence clearly shows that food was prepared here since lots of butchered bone was recovered, as well as charred cereal grains.⁹

Some time later in the ninth century, settlement also occurred on the promontory formed between the confluence of the Poddle and the Liffey. Excavations at Temple Bar West (to the east of Fishamble Street/Wood Quay)

5 M. Hurley, 'Viking elements in Irish towns' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 154–64. 6 E. Bourke, 'Life in the sunny south-east: housing and domestic economy in Viking and medieval Wexford', *Archaeology Ireland*, 9:3 (1995), 33–4; Hurley, 'Viking elements'. 7 L. Simpson, 'The first phase of Viking activity in Dublin: archaeological evidence from Dublin' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 418–29. 8 Ibid., p. 418; M.A. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), pp 50–1. 9 Simpson, 'First phase', pp 426–7.



18.2 The development of Viking Dublin – a reassessment based on recent archaeological evidence (after L. Simpson, ‘The first phase of Viking activity in Dublin: archaeological evidence from Dublin’ in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 418–29). A: mid-ninth-century settlement; B: late ninth-century settlement; C: tenth-century settlement; D: late tenth-/eleventh-century settlement; E: thirteenth-century settlement.

revealed a series of small sunken houses, followed by two phases of post-and-wattle houses and animal pens of varying morphology.¹⁰ Interestingly, there was no evidence for a break in occupation at this site, despite annalistic references to the ‘expulsion’ of the Vikings from Dublin in 902.¹¹ Simpson suggests that this affected only the ruling classes and that otherwise life went on within the settlement.¹² Environmental evidence from this early phase of settlement indicates that animals were kept within house plots, both plant and insect remains suggesting the presence of animal dung and nitrogen-enriched ground within yard areas and buildings.¹³ One deposit in an annexe to a circular enclosure produced very high numbers of the human flea, *Pulex irritans*, which is also known to infest pigs. This enclosure may therefore have been used for keeping pigs, with the annexe serving as a fallowing pen. Animal bone evidence

10 L. Simpson, *Director's findings: Temple Bar West* (Dublin, 1999), pp 20–9. 11 Valante, *Vikings in Ireland*, pp 77–8, referring to the ‘expulsion of the Foreigners from Ireland’, specifically Dublin, in 902, in the Annals of Ulster, the Annals of the Four Masters and *Chronicum Scotorum*. 12 Simpson, ‘First phase’, pp 420–1. 13 E. Reilly, ‘The contribution of insect remains to an understanding of the environment of Viking-Age and medieval Dublin’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin IV: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium*

from this phase suggests that cattle were the dominant meat source, followed closely by pigs and then sheep. Surprisingly, there appears to be little difference between the animal bone assemblages from the ninth-century and the later tenth-century settlement at Essex Street West. This suggests that, despite possible sources of hostility (that is raiding and slaving) between the new settlement residents and the surrounding population, the town was supplied from the hinterland from the start of its existence.¹⁴

The semi-rural nature of settlement at this time is in stark contrast to developments in the early tenth century when a denser concentration of houses was laid out in this area and along Fishamble Street. Excavations at Fishamble Street, Wood Quay, Winetavern Street, Christchurch Place, High Street and Castle Street have revealed the extent of the settlement of Dublin between the early tenth and the late eleventh century, with multiple layers of houses built within plots generally oriented on streets that still exist in some form today.¹⁵ Evidence from wood species analysis at Temple Bar West and Fishamble Street suggests that hazel was by far the most important tree exploited. It was used to build wattle walls, screens and paths, indicating that extensive hazel woodlands, possibly managed, must have been available to town residents throughout its history.¹⁶ Other important wood species at both sites include ash for major structural elements like door posts and jambs, alder for minor structural elements, and a great variety of other species used for different purposes.¹⁷

Surprisingly, at both sites, oak and elm do not feature as primary construction woods until much later, although oak is used for a great many artefacts at Temple Bar.¹⁸ This sets Dublin apart from most of the contemporary Viking settlements across Europe and has been noted as a gap in the oak tree-ring chronology for Dublin.¹⁹ Large oaks may not have been widely available during the tenth and early eleventh centuries, although a Viking ship built of oak dendro-provenanced to the 'Dublin area' has been dated to the mid-eleventh century.²⁰ Oak was used

2002 (Dublin, 2003), pp 40–63. 14 A. Cremin, 'Summary of animal bone analysis' in L. Simpson, 'Stratigraphic report on excavations at Temple Bar West, Dublin 2, licence no. 96E245, 6' (unpublished report, Dublin, 2001), pp 846–8. 15 L. Simpson, 'Forty years a-digging: a preliminary synthesis of archaeological excavations in medieval Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin I: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 1999* (Dublin, 2000), pp 11–68; L. Simpson, 'Fifty years a-digging: a synthesis of medieval archaeological investigations in Dublin city and suburbs' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2009* (Dublin, 2011), pp 9–112; P.F. Wallace, *The Viking-Age buildings of Dublin*, 2 pts (Dublin, 1992). 16 I. Stuijts, 'Summary of wood species analysis' in Simpson, *Stratigraphic report on excavations at Temple Bar West*, pp 845–6; Geraghty, *Viking Dublin*, p. 63 (wood identifications carried out by P.A. Jones). 17 Stuijts, 'Summary'. Wood species analysis from Fishamble Street carried out for the NMI indicated that larger structural elements were primarily ash/alder and wooden bowls/cores were primarily birch, spindle and other species (L. O'Donnell and S. Lyons, pers. comm.). 18 Stuijts, 'Summary'. 19 M.G.L. Baillie, *A slice through time: dendrochronology and precision dating* (London, 1995). 20 A. Daly, 'A tree-ring chronology of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) from

widely in Waterford from the earliest stage of settlement there, although this really overlaps with the latest phase of Fishamble Street.²¹ No pollen diagrams from the greater Dublin area for this period exist, with the result that it is difficult to know from where wood was sourced, or the exact composition and nature of such woodland.

A mix of plants and insects from Temple Bar and Fishamble Street houses characteristic of thatch, sod and turf demonstrates that they were roofed with a combination of these materials.²² Inside, conditions were generally warm, if a little damp, the initial sand/gravel and sod floors being covered with plant matter that eventually decomposed and was replaced with fresh material. The familiar suite of beetles, which feed on a variety of moulds on decaying plant matter, now colloquially known as the 'house fauna', have been recorded in high numbers from many of the house floors at Essex Street West, Fishamble Street and Christchurch Place (pl. 17).²³ Large numbers of fleas and smaller numbers of lice were recovered, particularly from side aisle or bedding areas in these locations. Where occasionally high numbers of foul-indicating species occurred in house floors, especially dung beetles or fly puparia, they are probably related to a period of abandonment or change of use of a building to a temporary open byre.²⁴ It is likely that pigs, goats and possibly sheep were kept within house plots, even during intense periods of occupation, for a ready supply of meat, milk and wool. This might account for the higher number of pig bones, in particular, from early tenth-century Fishamble Street.²⁵ Occasional external parasites of animals, including puparia of sheep keds (small parasitic flies resembling ticks), were recorded from within buildings and yards in Fishamble Street, particularly from the early eleventh century onwards.²⁶

Plant macrofossil, bone and mollusc evidence from floors and cesspits suggested that an interesting mixed diet of meat, fish, shellfish, cultivated cereals and gathered fruits such as apples, sloes, hazelnuts, bilberries and blackberries was eaten by town residents. There is very little evidence for wild animal species (other than fish and shellfish) forming part of the diet.²⁷ The non-native grain weevil, *Sitophilus granarius*, and bean weevil, *Bruchus rufimanus*, were recorded from two early eleventh-century pit fills in Fishamble Street. Otherwise, these

Viking Dublin' in T. Bartlett (ed.), *History and environment: the Lord Edward Fitzgerald memorial fund bursary selected essays* (Dublin, 1998), p. 39. 21 E. O'Carroll, pers. comm. 22 Geraghty, *Viking Dublin*, pp 68–9. 23 Reilly, 'Contribution of insect remains'; G.R. Coope, 'Report on the coleoptera from an eleventh-century house at Christchurch Place, Dublin' in H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, Århus, 24–31 August 1977* (Odense, 1981), pp 51–6; E. Reilly, *From landscape to streetscape: insect evidence from Viking-Age Dublin*, forthcoming. 24 Geraghty, *Viking Dublin*, p. 69; E. Reilly, 'Analysis of insect remains from excavations at Barronstrand Street, Waterford, licence no. E4013' (unpublished technical report, 2011), p. 47. 25 F. McCormick, 'Man and domesticated mammals in Early Christian Ireland' (MA, NUI, 1982), pp 152–6. 26 Reilly, *From landscape to streetscape*. 27 Geraghty, *Viking Dublin*, pp 67–8; McCormick, 'Man and domesticated

beetles are absent from Dublin and indeed other settlements in Ireland until the mid-twelfth century, suggesting cereals and other foodstuffs were primarily sourced locally up to this point.²⁸

Despite the obvious strong Scandinavian influence on the foundation of settlement at Dublin, Wallace argues for a partially Insular or perhaps more ancient origin to the most common house types. This is due to the lack of direct parallels with houses constructed in Denmark, Norway or England at the same time.²⁹ Nevertheless, the near ubiquitous presence of Type 1 Hiberno-Norse houses in Irish towns and cities with Viking origins suggests that they were readily adopted at that time, particularly suiting the narrow plots that developed throughout these towns.

Waterford

Archaeological evidence suggests that settlement at Waterford began slightly later than in Dublin, in the early eleventh century, although references in the Annals of the Four Masters and the Annals of Ulster indicate Norse settlement in this area from the early tenth century.³⁰ The largest excavations took place at Peter Street, Olaf Street and High Street in the 1980s.³¹ Maurice Hurley suggests that the earliest settlement was farther to the east, near Reginald's Tower.³² The settlement was essentially located on a promontory between the River Suir and the marshy area of St John's River to the south, a location not unlike that of Dublin. Recently, a smaller excavation at Barronstrand Street has revealed further settlement west of the Viking wall/embankment built in the late eleventh century, but contemporary with the settlement within the walls.³³

House styles were essentially similar to those in Dublin, with Type 1 houses dominating in the earliest phases, although preservation was not so good at Peter Street/High Street as in Fishamble Street and Essex Street West in Dublin.³⁴ A number of sunken houses were constructed in the mid- to late eleventh century, similar to houses excavated at Coppergate in York, with elaborate entrances and sunken floors that may have served as cellars. There was probably an upper floor to these houses.³⁵ Houses in Barronstrand Street were relatively well preserved.

mammals', pp 152–6. ²⁸ Reilly, *From landscape to streetscape*; E. Reilly, 'Wax or wane? Insect perspectives on human environment interactions' in S. Conran et al. (eds), *Past times, changing fortunes* (Dublin, 2011), pp 94–5. ²⁹ Wallace, *Viking-Age buildings*. ³⁰ M. Hurley, 'Viking-Age towns: archaeological evidence from Waterford and Cork' in M.A. Monk and J. Sheehan (eds), *Early medieval Munster: archaeology, history and society* (Cork, 1998), pp 166–7; T. Barry, 'Waterford: a historical introduction' in M. Hurley et al., *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford: excavations, 1986–1992* (Waterford, 1997), pp 12–13. ³¹ Hurley et al., *Waterford excavations*. ³² M. Hurley, 'Topography and development' in Hurley et al., *Waterford excavations*, pp 7–11. ³³ D. Pollock, 'Preliminary report on archaeological investigations carried out during the redevelopment of the Penneys store, Barronstrand Street, Waterford, licence no. E4013' (unpublished excavation report, 2010). ³⁴ Hurley, 'Viking-Age towns', p. 168. ³⁵ Hurley, 'Viking elements', p. 169.

In addition to at least two levels of post-and-wattle Type 1 houses on three plots, an area of planks (possibly reused ship or furniture timbers) was laid out behind one house, serving as a yard at first and then the floor of an extension to this house.³⁶

Environmental evidence from Peter Street/High Street is rich and varied. Wood species identifications indicate that hazel was the primary wood used in wattle walls, screens and fences. Oak, alder and ash were the main species used for door jambs, thresholds and roof supports, although oak appears to have been exclusively used for door jambs. Ash was used for the walling staves of the sunken buildings also but, in general, it had a limited load-bearing function, unlike the ash as used in early Dublin houses.³⁷ Oak played a dominant role in the major structural elements at Barronstrand Street, too, and the reused furniture or ship planks were all identified as oak.³⁸ There would appear to have been no shortage of oak in woods surrounding Waterford during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

Plant remains evidence from Peter Street/High Street suggests that, like Dublin, houses were roofed with straw and turf/sod, and floors were possibly strewn with rushes or other plant material. The side aisle areas contained large numbers of seeds of hedgerow plants, suggesting either that bedding material was gathered from such locations or that gathered foodstuffs were stored in these areas.³⁹ Oats, barley, bread-wheat and a little rye were the main cereals recovered, while hazelnuts, berry fruits, sloes and apples were clearly also eaten. Burnt fish bones in the central floor areas suggest that fish was an important component of the diet.⁴⁰ Cattle dominate animal bone assemblages from the earliest phase of settlement here, with sheep/goat increasing in importance and pigs decreasing in importance over time. The significant proportion of sheep/goat within the animal bone assemblage is thought to be illustrative of increased wool trade in the twelfth century.⁴¹ The large number of pits excavated across the site and at Barronstrand Street shows that waste management was a critically important issue. Insects from pits at both sites indicate that both household waste and human excrement were dumped into pits, although fills were generally fouler in Peter Street/High Street.⁴² Evidence for the arrival of the grain and bean weevils, *S. granarius* and *B. rufimanus*, in cesspit deposits is slightly later than Fishamble Street, in Dublin, and late in terms of the Viking Age at the early to mid-twelfth century. Neither appears at Barronstrand Street in pit or floor fills.

³⁶ Pollock, 'Preliminary report'. ³⁷ M. Hurley (with wood identifications by P.A. Jones), 'The use of wood as a structural raw material' in Hurley et al., *Waterford excavations*, pp 40–4. ³⁸ E. O'Carroll, pers. comm. ³⁹ J. Tierney and M. Hannon, 'Plant remains' in Hurley et al., *Waterford excavations*, p. 883. ⁴⁰ Ibid., pp 885–7. ⁴¹ F. McCormick, 'The animal bones' in Hurley et al., *Waterford excavations*, pp 819–53. ⁴² Tierney and Hannon, 'Plant remains', pp 881–2; E. Reilly, 'A study of the insect remains (coleoptera) from the Viking–medieval excavations at Peter Street, Waterford, Ireland' (MSc., University of Sheffield,

At Barronstrand Street insect evidence from some house floor layers indicates that these were considerably fouler than might be expected within domestic structures and suggests the stabling of animals within plots and/or abandonment phases. Some suggestion of butchery activity is also evident in one building from the insects, as well as indications of generally damper ground conditions under foot. Insects also produced evidence of extant semi-natural woodland in close proximity to the town, owing to the number and variety of now extirpated woodland beetles recorded.⁴³ Parallels for the number and variety of such species exist only in the Liffey valley site of Clancy Barracks, Dublin, dating to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age.⁴⁴ Fewer rare wood-dependent beetles were identified from ninth- or tenth-century levels in Dublin (notable rare woodland fauna do exist from twelfth-century levels in Back Lane),⁴⁵ although possible imported wood-dependent beetles feature in the Fishamble Street assemblages and not elsewhere.⁴⁶

ENGLAND

York

Through the meticulous excavation and parallel environmental analysis of urban strata, York has become something of a 'type site' for environmental archaeologists against which all other 'Viking' settlements are compared. York was not a Viking foundation, but a pre-existing Anglian settlement, established some time in the seventh century and probably resembling other Anglo-Saxon *wic* or trading centres.⁴⁷ Prior to this, of course, it was the site of a large Roman fortress and occupation in some form probably continued throughout the intervening period. Huge amounts of data are available from Anglo-Scandinavian York and it would be beyond the scope of this essay to detail all of it. Instead, this summary will focus on the evidence from 16–22 Coppergate, perhaps the best understood area of Viking-Age settlement within the city.⁴⁸

Coppergate, from the Danish Kopr-gata ('cupmaker's street'),⁴⁹ is located on the spur of land above the confluence of the rivers Ouse and Foss, a strategic location for settlement going back to the Roman era. The most important phase of occupation was the laying out of tenements (plots) along the street frontage from c.930. Houses and/or shops were located at the street end of the plot, gable

1994); Reilly, 'Wax or wane', pp 30–2. 43 Reilly, 'Study of the insect remains', pp 45–6.

44 E. Reilly, 'Analysis of sub-fossil insect remains from Clancy Barracks, Islandbridge, Dublin 8, licence no. 07E0261' (unpublished technical report for Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd, 2009), pp 23–6. 45 Reilly, 'Contribution of insect remains'. 46 Reilly, *From landscape to streetscape*.

47 M. Whyman and A.J. Howard, *Archaeology and landscape in the Vale of York* (York, 2005), pp 30–4. 48 H.K. Kenward and A.R. Hall, *Biological evidence from 16–22 Coppergate* (York, 1995); T. O'Connor, *Bones from Anglo-Scandinavian levels at 16–22 Coppergate* (York, 1989). 49 Fellows-Jensen, 'Place-names as evidence', p. 91.

end to the front (similar to Fishamble Street), and the back of the plots ran down to the river containing workshops, yards, latrines, wells and rubbish dumps.⁵⁰ Waterlogging preserved several levels of post-and-wattle houses, similar to those found in Dublin. Metalworking seems to have been the predominant activity that took place in these plots, with abundant crucibles for metalworking techniques uncovered. Later in the tenth century, this whole area was covered by up to 1m of soil and a series of semi-sunken plank-built houses were constructed, more or less respecting the same boundaries.⁵¹

Wood species analysis indicates that all the major structural elements of the houses, particularly the posts and planks of the semi-sunken structures, were made of oak, in contrast to Dublin but similar to Waterford. The wattle elements were primarily hazel, with some willow used also, and roundwoods of oak, alder, birch, poplar/aspens, ash and various Maloideae.⁵² Interestingly, no obvious signs of coppicing were noted from the wood identifications, but it is possible that the sample size of only just over one thousand pieces was not sufficient to determine this. It is likely that fungal decay of the main uprights was a more likely cause of frequent rebuilding than insect attack, despite large numbers of wood-boring insects being noted in the deposits.⁵³ This is interesting as *Anobium punctatum* (the wood-worm beetle) was generally thought to attack older wood and should perhaps not have been so prevalent in buildings of short duration.⁵⁴ In Dublin it is not frequently encountered in early levels from either Essex Street West or Fishamble Street, but is much more prevalent in later buildings.⁵⁵ Are the high numbers of *A. punctatum* in York simply a reflection of the continuity of settlement and available habitat niches, in some form, from earlier periods?

A particular suite of plant and insect remains from deposits dating to the later phase of house building also suggests that turf was brought to site and used as roofing, similar to Dublin.⁵⁶ Within the houses, environmental evidence from floor deposits for craft activities includes dye-plant waste, sheep keds and lice (presumably from wool cleaning), wood-, bone- and leatherworking, and bee keeping. Parasites of humans, especially fleas and lice, were also concentrated in floor and bedding layers within houses. In general, the insect evidence from there suggests that living conditions were not filthy but, like Dublin, certainly damp enough for moulds to develop, upon which many species of the so-called 'house fauna' thrived. Floor layers with proportionally higher foul-indicating species may indicate periods of abandonment or low-grade use, something that was also evident in Dublin and Waterford. In contrast to the early phases of other Viking towns, there is very little evidence at Coppergate that animals were routinely kept within these plots.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ R.A. Hall, 'Site history and a summary' in Kenward and Hall, *Biological evidence*, pp 441–6. ⁵¹ Ibid. ⁵² Kenward and Hall, *Biological evidence*, pp 722–4. ⁵³ Ibid. ⁵⁴ N.E. Hickin, *The insect factor in wood decay* (3rd ed. London, 1975). ⁵⁵ Reilly, 'Contribution of insect remains'; Reilly, *From landscape to streetscape*. ⁵⁶ Kenward and Hall, *Biological evidence*, pp 724–5. ⁵⁷ Ibid.

Some of the pits were used exclusively for cess disposal, while others contained much more mixed fills, including ones of inorganic material. The layers of almost pure faecal material included abundant eggs of parasitic worms, wheat/rye bran, small fish bones, especially herring and eel obviously crushed by chewing, fruit stones, apple pips, beans, peas and bean weevils. The latter three were present in deposits from the ninth century, unlike at Dublin or Waterford. The grain weevil, *S. granarius*, however, is largely absent from Coppergate until the mid-twelfth century, a situation akin to contemporary Irish towns. It is known from Roman deposits in Britain, but is believed to have died out in the intervening centuries until the post-conquest period, possibly related to changing modes of grain storage.⁵⁸ There was lots of evidence for the use of moss for various sanitary purposes in cesspits.⁵⁹

Animal bones examined from all deposits in Coppergate suggest that cattle had pre-eminent importance as a meat source, with smaller amounts of sheep and pig.⁶⁰ On this basis, O'Connor has argued that access to and availability of good grazing land around the town was not problematic, at least during the mid-ninth to mid-tenth centuries.⁶¹ A higher proportion of pig and wild bird bones, possibly related to political and territorial unrest in York, characterizes the later tenth- to early eleventh-century phase of Coppergate.⁶² A combination of changes in freshwater mollusc and fish species at Coppergate also indicates a possible reduction in water quality in the last quarter of the tenth century.⁶³ This may have been due to the intensification of settlement, which led to an increase in surface run-off and/or dumping of waste into the rivers around the town.

Many other settlements across eastern and northern England have traces of Viking-Age settlement, but none has been brought to life so vividly through the analysis of environmental evidence as has York.

NORWAY

Kaupang

Kaupang was one of the early Viking towns, founded c.800 in Vestfold at the mouth of Oslo Fjord, then part of the Danish kingdom. It flourished for a short period and was abandoned around 930, similar to the early phase of Ribe and Birka.⁶⁴ Its location along the main coastal sailing route and near the mouth of the River Lågen, which gave access to the interior of south-eastern Norway, gave it strategic importance.⁶⁵ This part of Norway was known for its iron, soapstone and whetstone products, which were traded across the Viking world.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ Ibid. ⁵⁹ Ibid. ⁶⁰ T. O'Connor, 'Livestock and deadstock in early medieval Europe from the North Sea to the Baltic', *Environmental Archaeology*, 15:1 (2010), 5. ⁶¹ Ibid., 8.

⁶² Ibid., 10. ⁶³ Kenward and Hall, *Biological evidence*, p. 780. ⁶⁴ D. Skre, 'Kaupang – Skiringssalr' in S. Brink and N. Price (eds), *The Viking world* (London, 2008), p. 112.

⁶⁵ Ibid. ⁶⁶ Ibid.

Excavations have taken place within the settlement area and in the surrounding cemeteries since the mid-nineteenth century. Excavations carried out in 1998–2003, however, with a comprehensive sampling strategy for ecofacts have shed the most light on the form, layout and living conditions within the settlement and the wider environment.⁶⁷ Organic preservation was confined to pits and ditches, charring being the main preservation pathway within the houses. The earliest phase of Kaupang indicates that craft production, metalworking and other activities took place there, but with no permanent settlement; in effect, it was a seasonal trading camp. Within a decade, however, permanent houses were built on the plots, spread out along the original shoreline.⁶⁸

Pollen taken from a small bog 800m to the north of Kaupang suggests that, prior to the founding of the settlement, the wooded landscape was being cleared for cultivation already, with pine, alder and birch reduced and grasses, plantains and herbs rising.⁶⁹ Surprisingly, there appears to be a drop in cultivation and agricultural activity in the immediate vicinity of the settlement during the occupation phase, but owing to the imprecision in the dating of the core and the short duration of occupation at Kaupang, this drop in activity may actually reflect the abandonment phase.⁷⁰ Plant remains analysed from pits, floors, side aisles and midden layers show the presence of barley, oats, rye and (in very small quantities) wheat. Some of this may have come from imports into the town but it is likely that cultivation was taking place in the hinterland. Barley in particular is ubiquitous in the deposits examined. No insect pests of stored grain were found in the deposits, which would argue against large-scale imports of grain into the town from other parts of northern Europe.⁷¹

Bone preservation was particularly poor at Kaupang, with only 1,506 bone fragments of the nearly 70,845 specimens collected having diagnostic taxonomic elements. Most of the bones collected had been badly burnt and/or fragmented, notably from the floors of houses. Better preservation was noted from pits, where a large number of fish bones were recovered. Of those that could be identified, pigs dominated followed by cattle, then sheep/goat and cats. Identified fish bones suggest that herring followed by cod, saithe, hake and ling were eaten – a pattern repeated in other early Viking towns. The wild element of the fauna was negligible with tiny numbers of red deer, wolf/large dog and hare identified. With the possible exception of the small number of cat bones recovered, there was no clear evidence for a fur trade operating from Kaupang, as noted in

67 L. Pilo, 'The settlement: character, structures and features' in D. Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal* (Oslo, 2007), pp 191–222; R. Sorensen et al., 'Geology, soils, vegetation and sea-levels in the Kaupang area' in Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, pp 251–72; J. Barrett et al., 'Interpreting the plant and animal remains from Viking-Age Kaupang' in Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, pp 283–319. 68 Skre, 'Kaupang – Skiringssal', p. 115. 69 Sorensen et al., 'Geology, soils, vegetation and sea-levels', p. 271. 70 Ibid.; Barrett et al., 'Interpreting the plant and animal remains', p. 303. 71 Ibid.

Hedeby and Birka. A surprisingly large number of beetles associated with 'old bones' or dried skins were recovered from two pits at Kaupang, in particular *Omosita colon*.⁷² The range of bones identified in the same pits did not necessarily support the notion that these beetles were living on the detritus of skinning. It is possible, given the high number of fish bones in one of the pits, that they were living on dried fish, but hides of animals (other than fur) or simply a large amount of discarded bone might also provide an explanation for their presence.⁷³

Houses showed a similar overall construction method to that of other Viking towns, with evidence for sand and gravel-size stones used in the foundation layers. Charcoal (identified mainly as oak and ash) and hearth ash may also have been spread across the floors, since charred bone, barley grains and hazelnut shells were recovered from floors and side aisles. The majority of wood identified on site came from the waterlogged pits and was dominated by oak, with smaller amounts of pine, ash, beech and poplar/aspens.⁷⁴ From the pits, the insect and plant macrofossil evidence suggested that they were primarily filled with household waste, not human or animal excrement. Indeed, no pit excavated at Kaupang could convincingly be regarded as a 'cesspit'.⁷⁵ This could, of course, be simply a reflection of the final use of the pit – a pattern repeated in many Viking-Age and later medieval towns. Interestingly, and similar to Birka, a deep cultural layer was noted in the harbour area of the town and it may be that dung, excrement and other fouler organic material were being dumped offshore. Analysis of this deposit did not give clear indications of a strong 'cess' element, but intestinal parasites were not examined.⁷⁶

The very low number of synanthropic beetles (or 'house fauna') suggests that the settlement at Kaupang was new at the time of foundation (that is, not based on an earlier settlement), intermittent in nature, or simply very short-lived. Certainly, the intensity and longevity of occupation demonstrated through the rich synanthropic faunas of York, Dublin or sites like Deer Park Farms in northern Ireland are not evident here.⁷⁷ Bone, plant macrofossil and artefactual evidence suggest that the settlement drew on local resources, but had a strong maritime focus, which would perhaps argue against the notion of insularity as a reason for the poor synanthropic faunas.

DENMARK / GERMANY

Many Viking-Age towns and farmstead sites have been excavated in Denmark. At Ribe, possibly the oldest town in Denmark, limited plant macrofossil and animal bone analyses have been undertaken, mainly owing to the slightly poorer

⁷² Ibid., pp 290–6. ⁷³ Ibid., pp 307–8. ⁷⁴ N. Bonde, 'Dendrochronological dates from Kaupang' in Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, p. 275. ⁷⁵ Barrett et al., 'Interpreting the plant and animal remains', pp 297–300. ⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 300. ⁷⁷ Ibid., pp 302–3.

preservation conditions.⁷⁸ The most famous 'proto-town' of all, Hedeby, now in Germany, has been the subject of detailed plant macrofossil/microfossil and animal/fish bone studies. Unfortunately, insects were not analysed from either site. The slightly later foundation of Viborg, however, has been the subject of recent multidisciplinary analysis that has produced some fascinating evidence comparable to other contemporary urban settlements such as Dublin, Waterford and York. The available evidence from Hedeby will briefly be discussed below, and this will be followed by a more detailed assessment of the findings from Viborg.

Hedeby

Hedeby/Haithabu was a trading centre from the ninth to the eleventh century. It is first mentioned in 804 but there was probably a smaller trading community before this.⁷⁹ It developed into the leading 'emporium' or proto-town of the Danish kingdom until its demise in 1066. After its destruction in the mid-eleventh century, the settlement effectively moved across the fjord to Schleswig, which flourished from the mid-eleventh to the thirteenth century. The settlement of Hedeby encompassed some twenty-seven hectares, with evidence for streets, workshops, houses, a harbour with landing points and a large cemetery.

Plant macrofossil evidence suggests that barley was the most important food crop, followed by rye and oats. Bread-wheat and millet played only minor roles here.⁸⁰ The presence of waste from crop processing would suggest that some of the townspeople were engaged in agricultural activity, or at least the processing of its products. Flax was also important, possibly as a source of oil, but potentially for its fibre. Rich finds of damson stones suggest cultivation of this fruit, but other gathered fruits featured heavily in plant macrofossil assemblages, including apple, sloe, wild cherry, blackberry, raspberry, bilberry, hawthorn, rowan and elder. Other gathered foodstuffs include hazelnuts, beechnuts, hops, acorns and bog myrtle. Many of these species point to the presence of woodland in the surrounding landscape, while the nutlets of hops may have been the waste

⁷⁸ C. Feveile and S. Jensen, 'Ribe in the eighth and ninth century: a contribution to the archaeological chronology of north-western Europe', *Acta Archaeologica*, 71 (2000), 9–24; C. Feveile, 'Ribe: continuity or discontinuity from the eighth to the twelfth century?' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 97–106; H.-A. Jensen, 'Seeds and other diaspores in soil samples from Danish town and monastery excavations, dated 700–1536AD', *Biologiske Skrifter*, 26 (1986), 10–22; K.-E. Behre, 'The history of beer additives in Europe: a review', *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*, 8 (1999), 38–9; T. Hatting, 'The archaeozoology' in M. Bencard et al., *Ribe excavations, 1970–76*, 3 (Esberg, 1991), cited in O'Connor, 'Livestock and deadstock', 4–12. ⁷⁹ C. von Carnap-Bornheim et al., 'Hedeby, the settlement and the harbour: old data and recent research' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 511–24. ⁸⁰ K.-E. Behre and M. O'Connell, 'English summary' in K.-E. Behre, *Ernährung und Umwelt der wikingerzeitlichen Siedlung Haithabu: die Ergebnisse der Untersuchungen der*

product from brewing. Exotic foodstuffs recorded at Hedeby included grape pips, walnuts and possibly peaches.⁸¹

Wood identifications from the town and harbour area suggest that oak was the dominant construction timber at this time, something that it has in common with other Danish towns, Waterford and York, although not Dublin. Pollen analysis from close to the town indicates that woodlands were dominated by oak, beech and lime. Meadow and heathland were also present in the surrounding landscape.⁸²

Approximately 700,000 bone finds were recorded at Hedeby, including fish and bird bones.⁸³ Herring was highly valued, followed by perch, then various members of the cod family – all locally available in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. A huge variety of birds were identified at Hedeby, some clearly exploited for their meat such as mallard ducks, others possibly used for hunting such as goshawks and peregrine falcons, or traded for similar activities.⁸⁴ Wild animal species numbered 133, though these still represented only 1–2 per cent of all the bone finds. Among the wild species recorded were boar, auroch, moose, wolf, lynx, wild cat, otter, fox, marten and weasel. Hedeby's important role in the fur trade is demonstrated by many of the wild species recorded. The overwhelming majority of bone finds, however, were as a result of butchery of domestic species. Hedeby's population reached a thousand or more in the tenth century – a large population to provision and feed with meat, fat, hide, wood and animals for work. Pigs dominate the assemblage, followed by cattle and sheep/goat, a pattern not uncommon across the Viking world. Pigs provided the bulk of the meat, while the age-at-slaughter profile for cattle and sheep/goat would suggest that these were kept longer, probably for work uses, wool and milk.⁸⁵

Viborg

Viborg was a later foundation than either Ribe or Hedeby, with its origins dating probably from the start of the eleventh century. The great military road that ran down through Jutland to the Danevirke border wall started near Viborg and possibly gave it strategic significance.⁸⁶ Excavations have taken place in Viborg since the late 1960s, most recently at the Søndersø settlement, close to the shoreline of Søndersø lake.⁸⁷ Here a workshop, most likely used for metalworking (possibly a forge), latrine and waste middens were excavated. No residential

Pflanzenreste (Neumünster, 1983), pp 186–8. 81 Ibid. 82 Ibid. 83 C. Becker and G. Grupe, 'Archaeometry meets archaeozoology: Viking Haithabu and medieval Schleswig reconsidered', *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 4 (2012), 241–62; G. Grupe et al., 'A brackish water aquatic food web: trophic levels and salinity gradients in Schlei fjord, northern Germany, in Viking and medieval times', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 36 (2009), 2125–44. 84 Becker and Grupe, 'Archaeometry meets archaeozoology', 251–2. 85 Ibid., 256. 86 www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk/en/the-sea-stallion-past-and-present/the-viking-age-in-scandinavia/viborg/ (accessed 19 July 2012). 87 M. Iversen et al., *Viborg Søndersø 1018–1030: arkæologi og naturvidenskab i et værkstedsområde fra vikingetid* (Højbjerg, 2005).

houses were found, confirmed by the very low levels of insects belonging to the house fauna group in the deposits. It is likely that they were located further uphill. A very limited pollen study from peat deposits below and cultural layers within the Viking settlement showed a distinct difference between the background, 'natural' environment prior to settlement and the cultural layers that formed over this.⁸⁸ Pollen from the peat indicated a damp, wetland environment with shrub taxa comprising birch, willow and alder. Insect remains from the same layers broadly supported this analysis.⁸⁹ Sand and gravel were used to build up floor levels within the workshop area, and presumably within houses also, probably to provide a drier ground surface under foot – something reflected in river/lakeside settlements throughout the Viking world. The underlying dampness, however, is responsible for the excellent preservation of organic remains. Hazel pollen was dominant in the cultural layers, which is no surprise given the prevailing use of hazel in wattle walls and fences.⁹⁰ Pollen of both cultivated plant and arable weeds occurred in these layers as well. The sample from a clearly identifiable dung layer had a very interesting profile, being dominated by pollen of barley and sweet gale. The suggestion here is that brewing was taking place on site – something that Viborg has in common with other significant Viking settlements – and that the waste from the brewing process was fed to pigs or cattle as fodder.⁹¹

Dendrochronological studies show that oak was used for the larger structural elements, especially posts, but that none of it was from large trees.⁹² This suggests that either younger wood was deliberately chosen or that older, larger oak trees were not available by this time. Surprisingly, the ubiquitous woodworm beetle, *Anobium punctatum*, was hardly present on this site, which may suggest that these buildings were not particularly long-lived and that relatively fresh wood was used. *Lyctus linearis*, the 'powder-post' beetle, was present but is generally thought to be able to attack relatively fresh wood. While hazel rods of even size were chosen to make the wattle walls, no clear coppicing cycle could be detected.⁹³ Alder, poplar and birch were also used for other structural elements of the workshop and latrine lining. Evidence from insect remains and plant macrofossils suggest that turf was used as a roofing material, although plant growth detected in the floor layers may indicate that part of the building was unroofed in any formal sense. Woven mats, sails or even hides may have been used instead.

88 C. Christensen and M.F. Mortensen, 'Landskab og miljø før og under bosættelsen – geologi og pollenanalyse', English summary in Iversen et al., *Viborg Søndersø*, pp 141–50.

89 H. Kenward, 'Insects and other invertebrates' in Iversen et al., *Viborg Søndersø*, pp 215–38.

90 A. Daly, 'Dendrochronological dating and species identification of structural wood from Viborg Søndersø' in Iversen et al., *Viborg Søndersø*, pp 151–62.

91 Christensen and Mortensen, 'Landskab og miljø'. 92 Daly, 'Dendrochronological dating'. 93 D. Robinson et al. 'Ressourcer: handvaerk, husholdning og redskaber', English trans. in Iversen et al.,

The presence of the hide beetle, *Trox scaber*, the long-horn beetle, *Phymatodes testaceus* (which lives under bark), cattle phalanges and bark fragments in one mixed outdoor context suggests that the tanning of leather was taking place somewhere in the vicinity (pl. 18).⁹⁴ Clear evidence also exists from the bone analysis for the skinning of animals for fur, especially polecat, fox, hare and possibly domestic cat. It would appear that this area of Viborg was the craft production zone, with metalworking, comb making, leatherworking and fur production all taking place.

Other evidence of diet and local food resources comes from the latrine and outdoor middens. Very low levels of ectoparasites of animals and low levels of grassland plants suggest that animal husbandry was not taking place in close proximity to the Sondersø site. Butchery of animals in the vicinity might explain the presence of dung or manure, that is to say faeces removed from intestines and/or stomach contents dumped in the yard area prior to processing for meat or the preparation of skins for tanning. A large amount of food waste was found in the southern and western parts of the excavated zone, suggesting that houses lay just to the south. Bones of chicken, geese, cattle, pigs and sheep were identified, alongside oyster shells and bones of herring, eel, perch and smelt. Other than fish, very few wild species were identified. Other foods from the latrine included onions, various wild fruit seeds, apple pips, hazelnuts, peas, beans, rye, barley and oats. Specific insect and plant macrofossil evidence for moss was also indicated here, most probably used as toilet wipes, as has been demonstrated from other Viking settlements such as Dublin and York.⁹⁵ Thus, a thriving industrial zone, with hints at the domestic zone beyond, was evident at Viborg.

SWEDEN

A smaller number of sites in Sweden have been the subjects of multidisciplinary environmental analysis and there are very few published insect studies, medieval Uppsala being one exception.⁹⁶ The town of Birka, however, deserves special mention since recent studies have produced a compelling picture of the environment of the settlement and the impact on its immediate hinterland.

Birka

Birka was the first town in Sweden, founded some time after 750. It operated as an international trading centre in the Baltic Sea at the same time as other proto-

Viborg Sondersø, pp 529–52. ⁹⁴ Robinson et al., ‘Ressourcer’; Kenward, ‘Insects and other invertebrates’. ⁹⁵ Robinson et al., ‘Ressourcer’. ⁹⁶ M. Hellqvist and G. Lemdahl, ‘Insect assemblages and local environment in the medieval town of Uppsala, Sweden’, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 23 (1996), 873–81.



18.3 Aerial photograph of Birka, Sweden. The fortress was located on high ground (right foreground), the settlement along the shoreline below the fortress (also right foreground) and the palisade offshore.

towns such as Hedeby and Ribe. It is located on a small island, Björkö, 30km west of Stockholm in Lake Mälaren (fig. 18.3). During Viking-Age occupation of the site, the lake was a gulf of the Baltic Sea with brackish water.⁹⁷ The site is famous for its distinctive ‘black earth’ or ‘Birka layer’, essentially a deep cultural layer created by human activity, which also built up in the lake beside a wooden palisade driven into the lake mud.⁹⁸ The maximum population of the town at the height of its powers may have been up to two thousand, with long plots focused on the shoreline separated by ditches or wooden fences and a series of jetties or landing points.⁹⁹ The town ceased to be a trading centre around 975 and theories as to why this happened have centred on the loss of shipping access to the town due to a drop in sea level and a rise in the threshold levels of the Södertälje and Stockholm straits.¹⁰⁰ Excavations have been ongoing at Birka since the late nineteenth century and they have produced evidence of local craft production, the fur trade and trade connections with Norway, Denmark, the Rhineland and Russia down to Byzantium.¹⁰¹ Large quantities of animal bone have been recovered, with pig bones generally outnumbering cattle bones. This is thought

97 J. Risberg et al., ‘Environmental changes and human impact as recorded in a sediment offshore from a Viking-Age town of Birka, southeastern Sweden’, *The Holocene*, 12:4 (2002), 445–58. 98 B. Ambrosiani, ‘What is Birka?’ in B. Ambrosiani and H. Clarke, *Investigations in the black earth, i: Early investigations and future plans* (Stockholm, 1992), pp 10–22. 99 B. Ambrosiani, ‘Birka’ in Brink and Price (eds), *Viking world*, pp 96–7. 100 Risberg et al., ‘Environmental changes and human impact’, 446. D. Skre, ‘The development of urbanism in Scandinavia’ in Brink and Price (eds), *Viking world*, p. 85 also suggests that local politics played a role in Birka’s demise. 101 Ambrosiani, ‘Birka’, pp 98–9.

to be as a result of the use of pigs as a ready meat source, something Birka has in common with other eastern settlements such as Hedeby.¹⁰² Numerous claw and foot bones of foxes and other fur-bearing species testify to Birka's role in the fur trade.¹⁰³

A 6.5m section through the lake deposits, incorporating the Birka layer, was examined for multiple microfossils, revealing fascinating insights into the town and lake environment.¹⁰⁴ Confirmation of the change from brackish water to freshwater in Lake Mälaren is shown by a distinct change in diatom species composition around the middle of the tenth century, coincident with the abandonment of Birka as a trading town. Prior to the build-up of the largely anthropogenic Birka layer in the lake, the pollen reflected the natural vegetation, most notably a mixed pine, spruce and birch forest with alder and oak also represented. During the time of settlement and the formation of the Birka layer there was an influx of microscopic charcoal and the character of the pollen changed dramatically. Pollen of herb, meadow and grass species dominate the record, alongside cultivated plants notably barley, oats and to a lesser extent wheat. Post-abandonment, trees appear again, but with evidence for a return to cultivation and cattle rearing from later in the medieval period to the present day.¹⁰⁵

Plant macrofossils, fly puparia and intestinal parasites examined from the sequence are almost exclusive to the Birka layer and confirm its anthropogenic origins. It is thought that this was as a result of deliberate dumping of waste beyond the palisade, rather than surface run-off, as the layer does not occur in the area between the palisade and the shoreline.¹⁰⁶ The presence of human intestinal parasite eggs, high numbers of lingonberry, bilberry and wild strawberry seeds, moss fragments and fly puparia suggests that the area was used for the dumping of human and animal excrement, something that may have parallels at other early Viking towns and at Irish and Scottish crannogs.¹⁰⁷ In addition, some writers have suggested that winter markets took place on the ice

102 O'Connor, 'Livestock and deadstock', 7. 103 P.G.P. Ericson et al., 'Animal exploitation at Birka: a preliminary report', *Fornvännen*, 83 (1988), 85–6. 104 Risberg et al., 'Environmental changes and human impact', 446–53. 105 Ibid. 106 Ibid.; J. Risberg and U. Miller, 'Siliceous microfossils in soils, ash strata and sediments from the Birka excavation site and its surroundings' in U. Miller and H. Clarke (eds), *Environment and Vikings: scientific methods and techniques* (Stockholm, 1997), pp 261–75. 107 Risberg et al., 'Environmental changes and human impact', 451; A.-M. Hansson and J.H. Dickson, 'Plant remains in sediment from the Björkö Strait outside the black earth at the Viking town of Birka, eastern central Sweden' in Miller and Clarke (eds), *Environment and Vikings*, pp 205–16; H. Kenward et al., 'Evidence from beetles and other insects' and 'The coleoptera' in A. Crone, *The history of a Scottish lowland crannog: excavations at Buiston, Ayrshire, 1989–90* (Edinburgh, 2000), pp 76–8, 99–101; K.A. Selby et al., 'A multi-proxy study of Holocene lake development, lake settlement and vegetation history in central Ireland', *Journal of Quaternary Science*, 20:2 (2005), 147–68; P. Johnston and E. Reilly, 'Plant and insect remains' in A. O'Sullivan et al., *Coolure Demesne crannog, Lough Derravaragh: an introduction to its archaeology and landscapes*

west of the palisade.¹⁰⁸ Hay and reeds may have been spread on the surface for animal fodder or to provide a dry footing, which then mingled with animal excrement and, when the ice melted, this material accumulated in the lake.¹⁰⁹

RUSSIA

Staraya Ladoga, Rurik Gorodishche and Novgorod

Three settlements in modern Russia have strong Scandinavian links – Staraya Ladoga, Rurik Gorodishche and Novgorod – but only the latter two have been the subject of multidisciplinary ecofactual analysis. A few brief points on the environmental evidence from Staraya Ladoga are worth noting. Situated on the banks of the River Volkhov, near Lake Ladoga, Staraya Ladoga was an ideal location for trading in goods coming from the west, north and south via the Volga and Dnieper rivers. It is suggested that most of the Arabic silver coinage that reached the Baltic passed through Ladoga.¹¹⁰ While excavations have revealed the presence of both Scandinavian and Slavic building styles, most houses were built with logs of pine and spruce, which departs from the traditional wattle or frame-built constructions during the Viking period farther west.¹¹¹ Cattle, followed by pig and with a small representation of sheep/goat, dominate animal bone assemblages from Ladoga, a pattern repeated across this region of Russia during the Viking era.¹¹² While Staraya Ladoga was famous as a fur-trading centre, few bones of fur-bearing animals are found there, something that is also seen at Gorodishche and Novgorod.¹¹³ This may be because only the pelts themselves came to the towns, the skinning and boning activities happening where the animals were trapped or hunted.¹¹⁴ The crop element of plant assemblages from Ladoga suggest a more mixed arable agriculture than farther

(Bray, 2007), pp 55–62, with an appendix at pp 90–2. ¹⁰⁸ B. Arrhenius, 'Aspects on barter trade exemplified at Helgö and Birka', *Arkeologiske Studier*, 19 (1993), 189–93, cited in Risberg et al., 'Environmental changes and human impact', 454. ¹⁰⁹ Risberg et al., 'Environmental changes and human impact', 454. ¹¹⁰ A.N. Kirpichnikov, 'A Viking period workshop in Staraya Ladoga, excavated in 1997', *Fornvännen*, 99 (2004), 183–96. ¹¹¹ F. Androshchuk, 'The Vikings in the east' in Brink and Price (eds), *Viking world*, pp 520–2; A.K. Kasparov, 'Faunal remains from the city-site of Staraya Ladoga (preliminary conclusions)' in A.N. Kirpichnikov and E.N. Nosov, *Drevnosti Povolzhovya (Antiquities of the River Volkhov area)* (St Petersburg, 1997), pp 26–30, cited in N.A. Makarov, 'The fur trade in the economy of the northern borderlands of medieval Novgorod' in M.A. Brisbane et al. (eds), *The archaeology of medieval Novgorod in context: studies in centre/periphery relations* (Oxford, 2012), p. 383; M. Aalto and H. Heinäjoki-Majander, 'Archaeobotany and palaeoenvironment of the Viking-Age town of Staraya Ladoga, Russia' in Miller and Clarke (eds), *Environment and Vikings*, pp 13–30. ¹¹² O'Connor, 'Livestock and deadstock', 7; M. Maltby, 'From Alces to Zander: a summary of the zooarchaeological evidence from Novgorod, Gorodishche and Minino' in Brisbane et al. (eds), *Archaeology of medieval Novgorod*, pp 353–62. ¹¹³ Makarov, 'Fur trade', p. 383; Maltby, 'From Alces to Zander', pp 365, 373–9. ¹¹⁴ Makarov, 'Fur trade', pp 381–90.

west, with barley prominent in earlier periods but soon matched by millet, and with oats, rye, bread wheat, beans and peas all contributing to the diet.¹¹⁵

Ryurik Gorodishche was founded in the early ninth century on a small, defended hilltop on the right bank of the River Volkhov. A strong Scandinavian influence is evident in the wealth of finds of jewellery, weapons and ritual items uncovered there, which have direct parallels with finds from Birka and Hedeby. Although it also served as a centre for trade and craft production, Ryurik Gorodishche would appear to have had a more 'military-cum-administrative' purpose.¹¹⁶ It is likely that its role was to ensure the safety of trading routes along the Volkhov and across Lake Ilmen, and to manage the lands held around the lake. Pollen evidence from the region suggests that cultivation of barley/millet, oats, wheat and possibly hemp was established prior to the arrival of the Viking settlers, probably associated with movement of Slavic tribes into the region in the preceding centuries. Pine, alder, spruce and birch were the dominant tree species, but oak, elm, hazel and lime were also present, the tree mix being very much dependent on local topographical variations and possibly on some climatic shifts noted during this period.¹¹⁷ Human influence on the forest mix was also noted, particularly in the expansion and contraction of birch, pine and spruce during the occupation of Gorodishche and the beginnings of settlement at Novgorod. Pine and spruce were the primary building woods of choice, although it has been noted that twenty-two different tree species were used in building and artefact manufacture in the two settlements.¹¹⁸

The houses and other features within the settlement of Gorodishche mainly yielded charred seeds of barley, rye and bread-wheat, since organic preservation here was not good.¹¹⁹ From the ditch surrounding the settlement, however, organic deposits yielded remains of a wealth of plant species, including glumes of millet and wheat, hops, hemp, flax, various berries and fruits, including apples and pears. It is clear that the residents of the settlement supplemented their diet of cultivated cereals with nuts and fruits. Hemp may have been gathered as a food or to make rope and flax, and may have been used for oil production or for cloth making. Evidence for the natural environment of the ditch and surrounding landscape was present in the form of plants of wet meadow, riverside

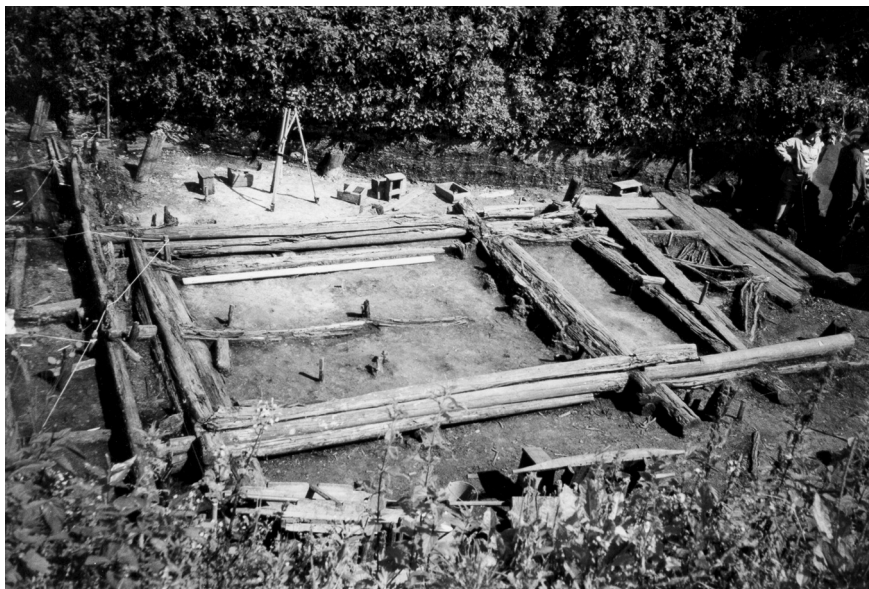
115 Aalto and Heinäjoki-Majander, 'Archaeobotany and palaeoenvironment', pp 21–2; A. Alsleben, 'The plant economy of northern medieval Russia' in Brisbane et al. (eds), *Archaeology of medieval Novgorod*, p. 349. 116 E.N. Nosov, 'A typology for towns on the River Volkhov: the formation of an early medieval centre in northern Russia' in M. Brisbane and D. Gaimster (eds), *Novgorod: the archaeology of a Russian medieval city and its hinterland* (London, 2001), pp 5–9. 117 E.A. Spiridonova and A.S. Aleshinskaya, 'Results of palynological investigations of the archaeological sites in the Lake Ilmen and Lake Kubenskoye study areas' in Brisbane et al. (eds), *Archaeology of medieval Novgorod*, pp 10–39. 118 A.S. Khoroshev and A.N. Sorokin, 'Buildings and properties from the Lyudin end of Novgorod' in M.A. Brisbane (ed.), *The archaeology of Novgorod, Russia: recent results from the town and its hinterland*, trans. K. Judelson (Lincoln, 1992), pp 107–59. 119 Alsleben, 'Plant economy',

and disturbed ground.¹²⁰ Much of this is mirrored in insect remains analysed from sections exposed at the Siversov canal, which cut through the lower part of Ryurik Gorodishche.¹²¹ Here in ninth- and tenth-century cultural deposits, beetles indicative of dung and wet decaying plant matter were found, suggesting the accumulation of dumped foul waste, possibly even human excrement. Much of the fauna is made up of wetland and aquatic species, unsurprising given the location, and some forest species are also noted. One species, *Stephanopachys substriatus*, is found in recently burnt coniferous wood and is often attracted to recent forest fires.¹²² Here, it may have been attracted to burnt log-built houses, something also noted in thirteenth- to fourteenth-century deposits in the Troitsky area of Novgorod.¹²³ The number of synanthropic species is very low compared to contemporary settlements in Ireland and Britain and, as at Kaupang or Viborg, this may be related to the intensity of settlement at the site or possibly to the style of house building.¹²⁴

Animal bones recorded at Gorodishche during excavations suggest that cattle were the most important meat-producing animals, with pigs second and sheep present in much lower numbers. It is suggested that the vast areas of swamp, wet meadow and forest surrounding Gorodishche and Novgorod were more conducive to cattle grazing and pig foraging than to sheep rearing.¹²⁵ Wild animals form only 2 per cent of the total animal bone assemblage identified and include elk, hare, squirrel, beaver, wolf and marten. It is unclear, from such a small assemblage, whether they were killed for their hides/fur or were eaten. Concentrations of cattle horn cores were also discovered at Gorodishche, which may have been associated with horn-working.¹²⁶ Fish formed an important part of the diet, particularly pike, zander and various species within the family Cyprinidae (bream, roach, dace etc.), all of which were locally available in the waters of Lake Ilmen and its rivers.

The town of Novgorod ('new town'), 2km downstream from Gorodishche, was first occupied in the early to mid-tenth century. It did not replace the old town as such, but developed and expanded rapidly given its more favourable, less restrictive geographical location. Multidisciplinary analysis of soils beneath the settlement in the Troitsky area of south-west Novgorod suggest that forest had been cleared from the area closest to the river in the preceding decades and a

p. 331. ¹²⁰ Ibid., pp 332–3. ¹²¹ M. Hellqvist and G. Lemdahl, 'Local environment at Viking-Age and medieval Novgorod, Russia, reconstructed from insect assemblages' in M. Hellqvist, *Urban and rural environments from Iron Age to medieval times in northern Europe: evidence from fossil insect remains from south-eastern Sweden and Novgorod, Russia* (Uppsala, 1999), pp 1–20. ¹²² E. Hyvarinen et al., 'Fire and green-tree retention in conservation of red-listed and rare deadwood-dependent beetles in Finnish boreal forests', *Conservation Biology*, 20:6 (2006), 1711–19. ¹²³ E. Reilly, 'Fair and foul: analysis of sub-fossil insect remains from Troitsky XI–XIII, Novgorod (1996–2002)' in Brisbane et al. (eds), *Archaeology of medieval Novgorod*, pp 275–7, 280. ¹²⁴ Ibid., pp 280–1. ¹²⁵ Maltby, 'From Alces to Zander', pp 351–79. ¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 376.



18.4 Tenth- and eleventh-century levels at Troitsky, Novgorod, showing the footprint of log-built house with raised floor (© S.A. Orlov).

meadow flora had developed.¹²⁷ A large area was then subjected to ploughing (probably over a prolonged period), traces of which were still visible in the subsoil.¹²⁸ Deliberate ploughing in advance of building, rather than for agricultural purposes, is known from Dublin in the ninth century, but it is not clear whether this was the case at Troitsky since plough marks were not noted under any other part of the settlement quarter.¹²⁹ Either way, the first plots were laid out over this area in a north-west to south-east orientation in 929–30.

Cultural layers then built up rapidly over the next five centuries, associated with repeated building and demolition of houses and ancillary structures. Insect and plant macrofossil evidence from the tenth- to twelfth-century levels suggest that moisture from the nearby river and the underlying impervious clayey soils made it necessary to rebuild structures frequently (fig. 18.4).¹³⁰ Even the house-building style of raised floors and the plank-built roads and pathways did not always mitigate the effects of damp ground conditions. The absolute dominance of pine and spruce as the building material of choice is demonstrated by the

¹²⁷ E.I. Alexandrovskaya et al., 'Woodland, meadow, field and town layout: the evidence from analyses of the earliest cultural deposits and buried soil in Novgorod' in Brisbane and Gaimster (eds), *Novgorod*, pp 15–21. ¹²⁸ Ibid. ¹²⁹ Simpson, 'Fifty years a-digging', p. 30. ¹³⁰ M. Monk and P. Johnston, 'Perspectives on non-wood plants in the sampled assemblage from the Troitsky excavations of medieval Novgorod' in Brisbane et al. (eds), *Archaeology of medieval Novgorod*, pp 290–1, 316; Reilly, 'Fair and foul', pp 277–8.

insect remains from the tenth-century levels, where pests of pine and spruce were present in deposits spread below the raised floors of the houses. The lack of any species associated with leaf litter suggests that all primary woodworking activity took place off-site, with only the finished logs brought on to the plot for house-building.¹³¹

The plants found most frequently in the earliest deposits from Troitsky were those characteristic of swampy ground, including water meadows and slow-flowing or stagnant water. These numbers decreased with time, although gathered plants from wetland environments or dung from animals grazing in such environments may also have contributed to the high percentage through time.¹³² Dung/decomposer insects, including species known to inhabit wet, muddy ground, dominated the beetle assemblages from these early levels, even from beneath house floors. In general, insect assemblages from house floor, outdoor and byre deposits at Troitsky displayed higher 'foul' signatures than contemporary settlements at Dublin or York, probably owing to the higher than usual number of muddy ground species.¹³³ Characteristic synanthropic species, such as *Aglenus brunneus*, were not present in Novgorod, despite clear evidence for intense and rapid urbanization. It may simply be the case that Novgorod was at the limits of the natural geographical range of *A. brunneus*. Nevertheless, its absence may also be an outcome of the dominant house-building style, where raised wooden floors did not result in the deep litter layers evident in houses in other parts of the Viking world, which resulted in the build-up of complex synanthropic faunas.¹³⁴

Ruderal weeds were frequently encountered in the plant macrofossil assemblages; these may have been growing within the house plots as well as being brought on-site from nearby cultivated ground. The importance of gathered foodstuffs was amply illustrated by the presence of seeds of wild raspberry, wild strawberry, sour cherry, apple, bilberry and hazelnuts, with a lesser presence of hops in the tenth-century levels.¹³⁵ An absence of exotic species from Troitsky was noted – an interesting anomaly given the possible presence of walnut shells at other sites in Novgorod and at Gorodishche, and its prominent position on trading routes to southern markets.¹³⁶ This may have been due to the status of those living in the earliest phase of settlement there. Barley, wheat and millet dominated the cultivated crop species noted in the early levels at Troitsky, but in general grains of cereals were poorly represented, since they do not preserve well in waterlogged deposits. Those that were identified tended to be charred examples, except in the case of millet where husk fragments were identified.¹³⁷ This follows the pattern seen at both Gorodishche and Staraya Ladoga.

131 Reilly, 'Fair and foul', pp 279–80. 132 Monk and Johnston, 'Perspectives on non-wood plants', pp 290–1. 133 Reilly, 'Fair and foul', pp 277–8. 134 Ibid., pp 280–1. 135 Monk and Johnston, 'Perspectives on non-wood plants', pp 299–303. 136 Ibid., pp 311–12. 137 Ibid., pp 295–8.

Among the large animal bone assemblages from the Troitsky area of Novgorod it is clear that cattle were central to the local food economy, with cattle bones forming over 60 per cent of these assemblages.¹³⁸ Evidence from insects from later periods in Troitsky's history suggests that butchery activity and possibly leatherworking were carried out on this site.¹³⁹ Pigs were the second commonest domestic animal represented, with sheep forming a smaller element of the local food economy. As noted before, this phenomenon may have been due to the local environment, with meadows and wet pasture well suited to cattle grazing and forests well suited to pig foraging. There is some evidence to suggest that horsemeat was also consumed here, with clear carcass processing marks evident on a proportion of the bones.¹⁴⁰ Wild animal species contributed less than 1 per cent of the assemblages identified from Troitsky, with elk and beaver being the most numerous from the early levels.

Knife marks on the beaver bones were more indicative of filleting and dismemberment than skinning, which might suggest that in this early period beavers were eaten as well as prized for their fur.¹⁴¹ Indeed, the low numbers of bones of fur-bearing animals, as noted at Gorodishche, would suggest that certainly Troitsky and possibly Novgorod in general were not centres of fur processing, but rather consumers or traders of the end product. A similar range of almost exclusively freshwater fish to that at Gorodishche was consumed at Troitsky in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹⁴² Russian sites dating from the Viking era, therefore, provide very interesting parallels and contrasts to towns across Scandinavia and farther to the west.

SUMMARY

An essay such as this is necessarily 'broad-brush' and selective. For example, Viking-Age farmstead and smaller settlements across the north Atlantic region have been left out. Many are subject to detailed palaeo-environmental studies and the attention of readers is drawn to a number of important papers detailing this evidence.¹⁴³

One of the obvious drawbacks to the data assessed in this essay is the variation in the level of detail from site to site, generally due to the different approaches

¹³⁸ Maltby, 'From Alces to Zander', p. 353. ¹³⁹ Reilly, 'Fair and foul', pp 278–9.

¹⁴⁰ Maltby, 'From Alces to Zander', pp 364–5. ¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp 365–6. ¹⁴² Ibid., pp 366–9.

¹⁴³ Among many publications on Norse settlement in the north Atlantic, the following is just a small selection: A.J. Dugmore et al., 'The Norse *landnám* on the north Atlantic islands: an environmental impact assessment', *Polar Record*, 41 (2005), 21–37; M. Hallsdóttir and C.J. Caseldine, 'The Holocene vegetation history of Iceland: state-of-the-art and future research' in C.J. Caseldine et al. (eds), *Iceland: modern processes and past environments* (Amsterdam, 2005), pp 319–34; S. Hansen and S. Stummann, 'Viking settlement in Shetland: chronological and regional contexts', *Acta Archaeologica*, 71 (2000), 87–103; J.H. Barrett et al., 'Diet and

and emphasis in excavation methodologies. In some cases, palaeo-ecological techniques (that is microfossil studies from cores) have been applied to good effect: for example, at Birka, Hedeby, Kaupang, Novgorod, Ryurik Gorodishche and Viborg. At these sites, background vegetational changes can be traced from pre-settlement times, illustrating the impact of the settlement on its hinterland, most notably in the reduction of tree cover and the rise in plants related to agriculture and waste ground. In the case of Dublin, Waterford¹⁴⁴ and to a lesser extent York, no pollen studies that adequately cover the early medieval period exist to give a picture of the 'receiving environment' and the effects of the settlement on that environment. Instead, this has to be inferred from the plant macrofossils, wood remains, insects and animal bones that occur on-site. This can produce a bias in the picture. Siobhán Geraghty also notes in her study of plant remains from Fishamble Street that softer vegetative tissue of roots and tubers were not examined owing to the lack of an appropriate high-magnification microscope.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, their role in the diet of the Viking-Age town's inhabitants is somewhat under-represented. Equally, human intestinal parasites have not been routinely examined from cesspit and other deposits in all the towns discussed here, making it more difficult to assess the health and hygiene levels within towns and also to identify possible human waste dumping locations.

Nevertheless, important information on the living conditions within urban centres and their immediate hinterland across Europe during the Viking Age can be gleaned. For example, insect and plant macrofossil evidence certainly suggests that conditions within houses were not uniformly foul or unpleasant, although the level of human parasites recorded from bedding areas in Dublin and York would definitely suggest some discomfort. Indeed, really foul deposits from houses are more likely to relate to periods of abandonment or temporary use as a byre. In Russia, underlying floor conditions were certainly damper than in towns farther to the west, but the raised floors there would have mitigated these effects and it is likely that the floors themselves were relatively clean and dry. Raised floors at Novgorod and, in the case of Kaupang, a relatively short period

ethnicity during the Viking colonisation of northern Scotland: evidence from fish bones and stable carbon isotopes', *Antiquity*, 75 (2001), 145–54. ¹⁴⁴ Three pollen diagrams come from sites in close proximity to Waterford city. Newrath, however, does not cover the early medieval period, Killoteran stops immediately prior to the arrival of the Vikings and Woodstown does not cover the period in sufficient detail to be useful. See S. Timpany, 'The changing landscape of the lower Suir valley: evidence for 9,000 years of people's interaction with the environment' in J. Eogan and E. Shee Twohig (eds), *Cois tSiúire – nine thousand years of human activity in the lower Suir valley. Archaeological excavations on the route of the N25 Waterford city bypass* (Dublin, 2011), pp 187–99, together with B.R. Gearey and T. Hill, 'Appendix 11. Palynological and diatom assessment of samples from Killoteran 9, Co. Waterford' on CD-Rom; A. Farrell and P. Coxon, 'N25 Waterford bypass: sedimentological and palaeoenvironmental investigation of wetland area adjacent to Woodstown' (unpublished report for the National Roads Authority, 2004). ¹⁴⁵ Geraghty, *Viking Dublin*, p. 67.

of settlement (approximately 130 years), may account for the comparatively poor 'house' beetle faunas recorded from these sites.

The use of hazel and oak as the primary house-building materials is evident at Hedeby, Kaupang, Viborg, Waterford and York. In the case of Dublin, ash and alder dominate for the large structural elements, while the Russian settlements unsurprisingly display a preference for locally abundant pine and spruce. Dublin is something of an enigma, with the simple explanation perhaps being the lack of large oak in local woodlands for house building. This suggests that oak was depleted in the surrounding landscape by the late ninth century and throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries. There does not appear to have been a shortage farther south at Waterford, where wood species identifications and beetles demonstrate the presence of ancient oak woodland in the vicinity. Oak became the construction wood of choice from the early Anglo-Norman period onwards in Dublin and rare or extirpated oak-dependent beetles appeared in house deposits from this time, suggesting that the felled oak was from 'ancient' woodlands.¹⁴⁶ One other possible explanation is that access to oak was controlled, perhaps 'reserved' for shipbuilding in tenth- and eleventh-century Dublin. Evidence from Temple Bar West attests to the presence of shipbuilders in this area at this time.¹⁴⁷ This may have inadvertently conserved what remained of ancient oak woodlands in the vicinity of Dublin along with their rare beetle faunas, which then become 'visible' again in the record in the late twelfth century. Oak used in structures at Viborg was notably young, leading to the suggestion that older oaks were also depleted in the surrounding landscape in that part of Denmark.¹⁴⁸ Plant and insects indicate that sod/turf and thatch were the primary roofing materials in Denmark, Norway, England and Ireland.

Evidence for diet, in the form of animal bones and plant remains, is variable across the towns examined, but a number of trends emerge. Bone assemblages from Birka, Hedeby, Kaupang, Novgorod and Ryurik Gorodishche amply demonstrate the important role of cattle and pigs in the local food web, while pig bones outnumber cattle bones at different stages in the development of Dublin and York. In particular, the late tenth- and early eleventh-century bone assemblages at Fishamble Street and Coppergate produce high pig bone numbers, suggesting that pigs were either kept within plots as a ready meat source or shipped in as pork/bacon during politically uncertain times. Something that all sites have in common is the minor role played by wild animal species in the diet; however, the eating of fish and shellfish is well attested to at all sites. Remains of herring are particularly common in early Viking-Age towns, while cod and related species play a role, too. Although largely unidentified, fish clearly played an important role in the diets of Dublin and Waterford residents. Freshwater species dominate at Russian sites, but are also present at Hedeby, Viborg and York.

¹⁴⁶ Reilly, 'Contribution of insect remains', pp 56–8.

¹⁴⁷ Simpson, *Director's findings*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁸ Daly, 'Dendrochronological dating', pp 151–62.

The cultivation of cereals shows a definite east–west bias, with barley and oats dominant at Birka, Dublin, Hedeby, Kaupang, Viborg, Waterford and York. While barley is important at an early stage in Russian towns of this period, millet, wheat and rye become increasingly important. Rye is also present at Hedeby, Viborg, Waterford and York. The almost complete absence of grain weevils in tenth- and eleventh-century levels from all these towns suggests that grain was not imported from other parts of Europe, but rather that locally grown crops were relied upon. Grain weevils from mid-twelfth-century levels onwards at Dublin, Waterford, York and even Novgorod suggest the presence of imported grain and possibly changes in how grain was stored, which allowed this species to thrive in these new locations. The exploitation of wild and gathered fruits and other foodstuffs is common to all the towns discussed here, while many of the Scandinavian towns have clear evidence for beer brewing.

These are but a few of the trends noted in the environmental evidence from these important Viking-Age towns. Perhaps no uniform environmental ‘package’ exists across this vast geographical zone. Indeed, Wallace’s assessment of variations in house styles from Dublin and across the Viking world already hinted at this. In relation to diet and economy, local geographical, edaphic and political factors were just as influential as the cultural preferences of the new arrivals. It is worth noting that unpublished data on other ecofacts from some or all of these sites contained in ‘grey’ literature as well as in undergraduate, masters and PhD theses could greatly add to, or even change, the picture outlined here. This brief overview has also clearly demonstrated the need to identify suitable pollen sampling sites from Dublin to understand its early medieval woodland history.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ I should like to thank Ruth Johnson and Howard Clarke for the invitation to write this essay. Meriel McClatchie, Aoife Daly and Ellen OCarroll provided useful reference material. Thanks to Linzi Simpson, Mark Brisbane and Bjorn Ambrosiani for permission to reproduce plans and images, and to Johnny Ryan who prepared Figure 18.1. I wish to thank Mick Monk, Lorna O'Donnell and Bettina Stefanini for reading earlier drafts and making many useful suggestions for its improvement. The comments of an anonymous reviewer were also extremely helpful. Any subsequent errors or omissions are entirely my own. I should particularly like to thank Rónán and Áine for their patience during the writing process.

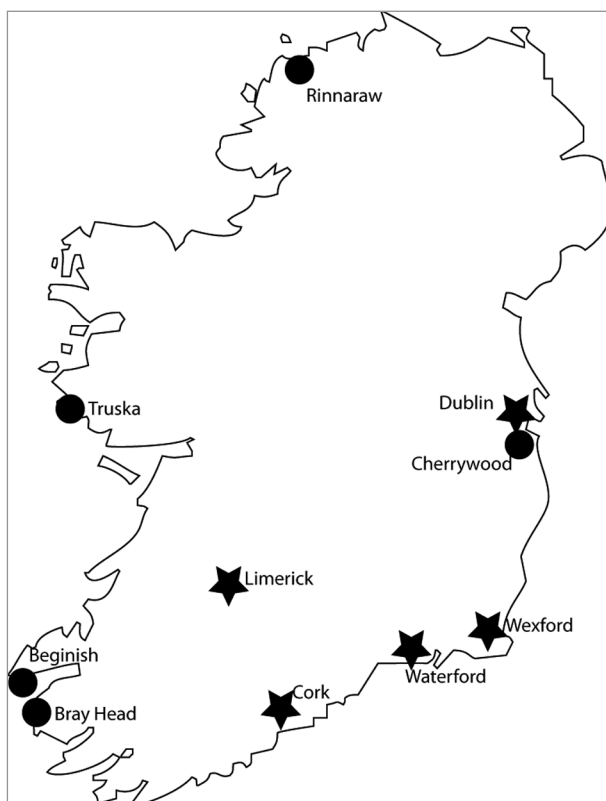
Where are the longhouses? Reviewing Ireland's Viking-Age buildings

REBECCA BOYD

The longhouse is a classic symbol of the Viking world. Tied up in these impressive buildings are connections to ancestral power, status and wealth, and they are found consistently across Scandinavia and the north Atlantic. The longhouse is totally absent from Ireland where, instead, Viking settlement is concentrated around the coast and rivers in what were to become Ireland's towns (fig. 19.1). Why is this classic expression of Viking identity missing from the Irish Viking Age, when other elements of the culture of the Viking homelands were imported wholesale: for example, weapons, furnished graves and a silver-based economy. Instead, a hybrid architectural form dominates the Irish Viking Age, coinciding with the development of urban life, further complicating the picture. The changes in Ireland from the ninth to the twelfth century are demonstrated in the rich archaeology of our towns, excavated or preserved underfoot over the past fifty years.¹ The earliest Viking settlement in Dublin now known is south of Dublin Castle, around the confluence of the Liffey and the Poddle and the 'black pool' at Duiblinn, while the twelfth- and thirteenth-century settlement expanded to the west beyond The Coombe and to the north in Smithfield. All of these investigations have been pre-development excavations, most famously those at Wood Quay, and we now have a remarkable corpus of urban Viking-Age housing not only from Dublin, but also from Cork, Waterford and Wexford. This corpus is very well preserved and, with more than 450 houses catalogued from across these towns,² Ireland has some of the most intensely excavated townscape of the Viking world and presents one of the most promising research opportunities.

While 'urban Vikings' are an accepted phenomenon, the question of whether or not Vikings lived in the countryside was of marginal interest when it was raised in the 1980s.³ John Bradley originally suggested that the Scandinavians

1 L. Simpson, 'Fifty years a-digging: a synthesis of medieval archaeological investigations in Dublin city and suburbs' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2009* (Dublin, 2011), pp 9–112. 2 This essay is extracted from my PhD thesis and I am grateful to the editors for this opportunity: see R. Boyd, 'Viking houses in Ireland and western Britain, AD850–1100: a social archaeology of dwellings, households and cultural identities' (PhD, UCD, 2012) for further discussion. 3 P.F. Wallace, 'The economy and commerce of Viking-Age Dublin' in K. Düwel et al. (eds), *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa* 4



19.1 Map showing the main Viking settlement sites in Ireland.

controlled lands around the towns to ensure steady supplies of food and raw material.⁴ At that time, no rural Viking settlements had been identified, but the discoveries at Cherrywood in the late 1990s made a Hiberno-Scandinavian influenced hinterland around Dublin more plausible.⁵ Since then, five sites have been proposed as Viking rural settlements based on excavation results and a combination of other evidence such as Norse-derived place-names, proximity to sites of historical events and coastal locations – all of which have been subject to much debate.⁶ This essay reviews the evidence for urban and rural Viking and

(Göttingen, 1987), pp 200–45; J. Bradley, ‘The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland’ in J. Bradley (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin OSA* (Kilkenny, 1988), pp 49–78. 4 Bradley, ‘Interpretation of Scandinavian settlement’, p. 53. 5 J. Bradley, ‘Some reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin during the ninth century’ in J. Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world: studies in honour of Howard B. Clarke* (Dublin, 2009), p. 48. 6 Ibid., pp 39–62; M. Gibbons and M. Gibbons, ‘A critique of the evidence recently presented for the existence of Viking maritime havens and associated rural settlement in Ireland’, *JKAHS*, 8 (2008), 28–73; M. Gibbons and M. Gibbons, ‘A Hiberno-Norse ringed pin from Omey Feichín, Connemara: its historical and cultural setting’, *JGAHS*, 57 (2005), 151–65; E.K.

Hiberno-Scandinavian settlements dating from the ninth to the twelfth century.⁷ Through examining the buildings themselves, it considers how these building styles reflected the identities of their occupants and what they can tell us of Ireland's place within the wider Viking world.

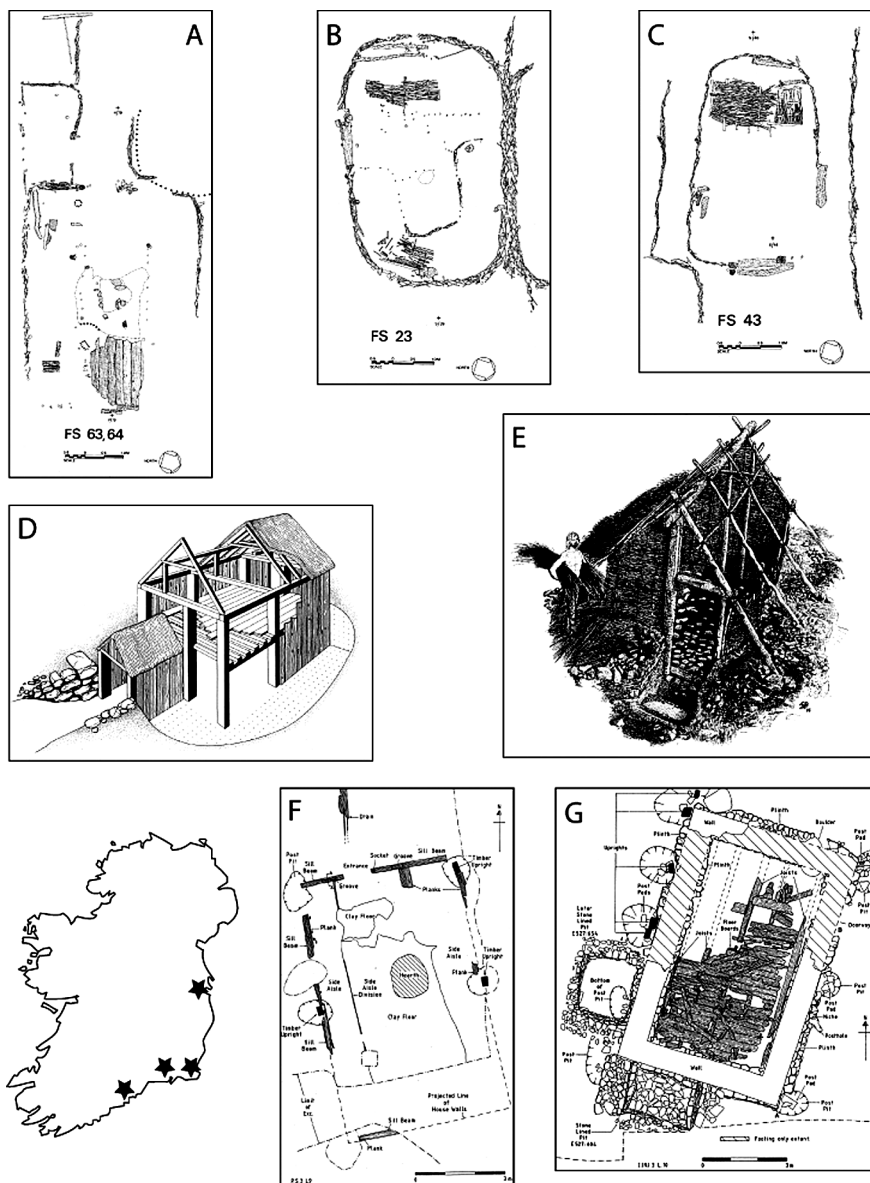
THE URBAN HOUSES

Ninth- to twelfth-century houses have been identified from twenty-three sites across Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Wexford. The first recognizably Viking-Age houses were excavated in the late 1960s by Breandán Ó Riordáin in the centre of Dublin.⁸ Slightly earlier than this, Marcus Ó hEochaidhe excavated similar deposits at Dublin Castle including, apparently, several structures that remain unpublished. The large excavations at Wood Quay (along with the important Fishamble Street series of sites) revealed further evidence for Viking Dublin in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹ The first evidence of Viking-Age levels from Waterford,¹⁰ Wexford¹¹ and Limerick¹² also emerged in the late 1980s. Urban redevelopment accounted for a huge growth in the number of excavations undertaken in Dublin throughout the 1990s and early 2000s,¹³ but it was not until 2003 that Cork's Viking settlement was identified unequivocally.¹⁴

Gibbons and E.P. Kelly, 'A Viking-Age farmstead in Connemara', *Archaeology Ireland*, 17:1 (2003), 28–32; E.P. Kelly, 'The Vikings in Connemara' in D. Ó Corráin and J. Sheehan (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 174–87; E.P. Kelly and E. O'Donovan, 'A Viking longphort near Athlunkard, Co. Clare', *Archaeology Ireland*, 12:4 (1998), 13–16. 7 With thirteenth-century dates, the sunken structures at King John's Castle in Limerick fall outside the remit of this essay. 8 B. Ó Riordáin, 'Excavations at High Street and Winetavern Street, Dublin', *Medieval Archaeology*, 15 (1971), 73–85; B. Ó Riordáin, 'The High Street excavations' in B. Almqvist and D. Greene (eds), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15–21 August 1973* (Dublin, 1976), pp 135–41; B. Ó Riordáin, 'Aspects of Viking Dublin' in H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, Århus, 24–31 August 1977* (Odense, 1981), pp 43–5. 9 P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Viking Dublin' in H.B. Clarke and A. Simms (eds), *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the ninth to the thirteenth century*, 2 pts (Oxford, 1985), i, pp 103–45. 10 M.F. Hurley et al. (eds), *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford: excavations, 1986–92* (Waterford, 1997). 11 E. Bourke, 'Viking and medieval Wexford', *Archaeology Ireland*, 9:3 (1995), 33–6. 12 K. Wiggins, 'King John's Castle, St Mary's parish', *Excavations 1990* (1991), pp 43–4. 13 Simpson, 'Fifty years a-digging', p. 9. 14 M.F. Hurley, 'Viking elements in Irish towns: Cork and Waterford' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 154–64; H. Kelleher, '04E0371, archaeological excavation at 35–9 South Main Street, Cork' (unpublished report, Cork, 2005); M. Ni Loingsigh, 'Main Street South, Cork', *Excavations 2003* (2006), pp 50–1; M. Ni Loingsigh, '03E1170, archaeological excavations at 40–48 South Main Street, Cork' (unpublished report lodged with the NMS, 2004).

The Hiberno-Norse building technology

From the outset, scholars were determined to record and to classify the houses as structures, rather than interpreting them as homes. The first classificatory scheme used wall construction methods to differentiate between



19.2 Summary presentation of the Hiberno-Norse typology. Key: A – Type 1 and Type 5; B – Type 2; C – Type 3; D – Type 4b; E – Type 4a; F – Type 6; G – Type 7.

types,¹⁵ but Hilary Murray later moved to a classification based on house shape and the presence or absence of internal roof supports.¹⁶ In 1985 Patrick Wallace proposed a new four-stage classification of the Wood Quay buildings based on ground plan or house form.¹⁷ By combining a number of features, he believed that this would provide a more comprehensive classification of the buildings than a study of any one aspect. In *The Viking-Age buildings of Dublin*, Wallace refined his classification further, developing the now familiar five-stage typology of the Dublin buildings.¹⁸ Wallace later combined the new houses from Limerick, Waterford and Wexford with the Dublin houses to propose the countrywide Hiberno-Norse building typology.¹⁹

This typology contains seven different building types, based on ‘the common constructional and design characteristics’ of these buildings – essentially the ground plan and roof support structure. Wallace’s building types are as follows (fig. 19.2; table 19.1):

Table 19.1 Functions of the structures in the Hiberno-Norse building typology.

Building type	Function
1	Primary domestic residence
2	Ancillary building, to provide sleeping/resting quarters, possibly for women in childbirth, children or the infirm
3	Closely related in function to Type 1 houses – domestic residence
4a	Domestic residence
4b	Two-storey buildings with storage cellars underneath and living quarters above
5	Non-habitational buildings – huts, pens, stores. Workshops should be added to this class
6	Primary domestic residence
7	Primary domestic residence

Type 1. This is the commonest building type and is regarded as the main residence, averaging 40.7m². This rectilinear post-and-wattle structure is placed end-on to the street in a long, narrow plot. It has two pairs of internal freestanding roof supporting posts that create a three-aisle layout. Additional lines of post-and-wattle run between the roof supports, turning these side aisles

¹⁵ H. Murray, ‘Houses and other structures from the Dublin excavations, 1962–76: a summary’ in Bekker-Nielsen et al., *Eighth Viking Congress*, pp 57–68. ¹⁶ H. Murray, *Viking and early medieval buildings in Dublin* (Oxford, 1983). ¹⁷ Wallace, ‘Archaeology of Viking Dublin’. ¹⁸ P.F. Wallace, *The Viking-Age buildings of Dublin*, 2 pts (Dublin, 1992). ¹⁹ P.F. Wallace, ‘The archaeological identity of the Hiberno-Norse town’, *JRSAI*, 22 (1992), 35–66.

into raised benches with brushwood, straw and wattle fillings. A hearth lies in the centre of the house, while areas of stone, wattle or timber paving are found in corners or doorways. The end walls feature opposed doorways with substantial doorjambs that also served as roof supports.

Type 2. This building is usually found behind the Type 1 house and is regarded as ancillary accommodation. This post-and-wattle building has an average area of 15m², but is sub-rectangular with a side-wall entrance. It may or may not feature a hearth, internal benches or large areas of wattle floor mats.

Type 3. These buildings are found only at Fishamble Street and Temple Bar West in Dublin, making this a Dublin type. It is a miniature version of a Type 1 house, designed to fit into some especially narrow properties. It measures approximately 15m², but usually contains a hearth and end-wall entrances. Parts of the floor may be covered by wattle mats, but the majority of the floor is uncovered.

Type 4. There are two styles of sunken-floored buildings in the corpus:

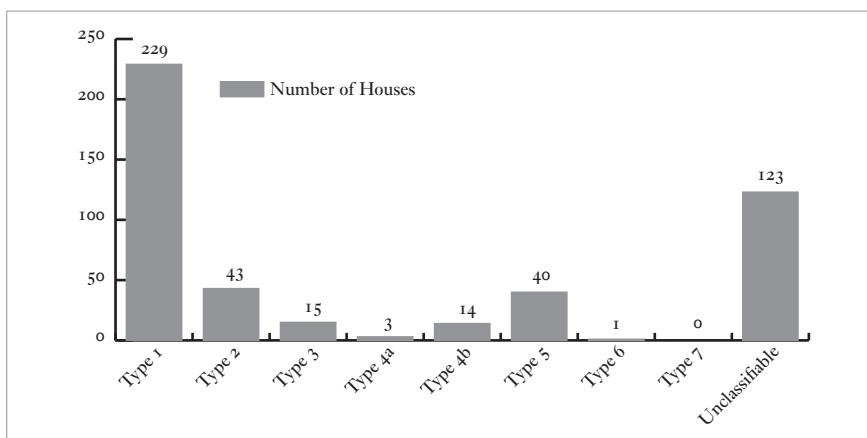
Type 4a. These small (7.7m²) ninth-century buildings are sunk straight into the ground to an depth of c.0.6m, providing them with earthen walls that may be faced with wattle panels or planks. The roofs of these earlier sunken structures were probably quite low and supported by internal posts. They are found in very early settlement contexts in Dublin at Temple Bar West and possibly also at Fishamble Street.

Type 4b. These are mainly found in Waterford and represent an eleventh-century improvement in carpentering and construction skills. These buildings were usually of sill-beam construction, provided with stone-lined entrance passages and sunken to a depth of 1.5m. They did not feature hearths, which suggests that they were below ground storage cellars supporting living accommodation on an upper floor. Their average area is 19.2m².

Type 5. These small post-and-wattle storage huts, workshops and animal pens may be stand-alone buildings or lean-tos or annexes to other structures. Some were roofed, with the weight of the roof borne by the doorway or freestanding roof supports, and some were provided with formal doorways while others had a gap in the wall or no apparent entrance.

Type 6. This represents the arrival of timber-frame construction in Waterford in the very late eleventh century. Vertical planks or panels were placed into grooved sill-beams to create the walls. The roof is supported by posts incorporated into the walls rather than by freestanding internal posts. A central hearth exists, but the three-aisled division is no longer a necessity.

Type 7. This building type comprises a single example excavated at Insula North in Waterford, dated to the mid- to late twelfth century. This rectangular building combined load-bearing stone walls (surviving to a height of 1.5m) with a raised wooden floor and is the first example of secular stone construction within an urban setting.



19.3 Chart displaying the number of buildings in each category of the Hiberno-Norse building typology. In total there are 467 houses, though there are 468 houses here because structure CD from Temple Bar West changes from a Type 2 to a Type 5 building during its lifetime and therefore is counted twice.

Table 19.2 Numbers of buildings in the Hiberno-Norse building typology dating from the ninth to the twelfth century.

Type	Number of houses	Date range, in centuries	Dublin	Waterford	Cork	Wexford	Limerick
1	229	Mid-ninth to fourteenth(?)	190	23	15	1	0
2	43*	Mid-ninth +	20	15	8	0	0
3	15	Late ninth to early tenth	15	0	0	0	0
4a	3	Mid-ninth to early tenth	3	0	0	0	0
4b	14	Late eleventh +	8	6	0	0	0**
5	40*	Mid-ninth to fourteenth(?)	36	0	3	1	0
6***	1	Early to mid-twelfth +	0	1	0	0	0
7***	1	Mid- to late twelfth +	0	0	0	1	0
0	123	Mid-ninth +	115	0	8	0	0
TOTAL	468		386	45	34	3	0*

Building CD, Temple Bar West, is the only example of a multiphase building that changes typology during its lifetime. CD begins life as a Type 2 building, but is reused as a Type 5 animal pen. Because of this, it is counted twice, in the Type 2 and the Type 5 categories, but in total there are only 467 buildings.

** There are three examples of Type 4b buildings found at King John's Castle in Limerick; however, these are dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and fall outside the time range of this work.

*** All but one example of Type 6 buildings and the single known example of a Type 7 building style fall outside the timeframe of the analysis.

Based on archaeological evidence excavated down to 2006, it is now possible to present totals for each of these building types. Of 467 houses, almost half (227) are Type 1, with 116 divided between the other types (fig. 19.3; table 19.2). The Type 1 house is the most common and geographically widespread building type, followed by Type 5 and then Type 2. Types 3 and 4a are found only in Dublin and Type 4b only in Waterford (prior to the twelfth century). A single Type 6 building falls into the late eleventh century, while the sole Type 7 house (dating to the mid- to late twelfth century) does not. In total, 123 structures cannot be classified to type, most of which were only partially excavated or were very poorly preserved with the result that no defining characteristics were found. A much smaller number of structures were completely excavated that do not fit into any of the classes in the typology.

The value of the Hiberno-Norse typology

Hill and Evans state that a class is a grouping based on ‘similarities and differences’, but that a type ‘is characterised by a cluster of non-random attributes’.²⁰ Using these definitions, Murray’s initial classification is not a true typology, since it was based on one attribute of the buildings – wall construction. Wallace’s combination of attributes is a typology and is a very successful one; it is well known at national and international levels and is used as the standard to which all Viking houses in Ireland are compared. When presenting the results of their excavations, other archaeologists talk of recording ‘parts of classic Type 1 houses’²¹ or the ‘typical Type 1 house’.²² Since the presentation of Wallace’s classifications, however, there have been no further advances in the study of these buildings and there has been no significant re-evaluation of the typology. It is an inherent danger with classificatory systems that they can stagnate or become an end in themselves, rather than an aid to further work.²³ Wallace admits that there are reasonable doubts over some of his classifications²⁴ and he has accepted²⁵ Maurice Hurley’s revision of the Type 4 sunken-floored structures as two separate traditions (accepted here as Types 4a and 4b).²⁶ Apart from this, there has been no move to evaluate the newest structural evidence from Viking-Age Ireland in relation to the established typology.

The typology is very much a product of its times; it was designed to reduce a large amount of data into a manageable dataset.²⁷ Looking at the current totals, half of the houses fall into a single class and a further quarter do not fall into any. This leaves one-quarter of the houses to create the spread across the typology

20 J.N. Hill and R.K. Evans, ‘A model for classification and typology’ in D.L. Clarke (ed.), *Models in archaeology* (London, 1972), pp 231–73. 21 Ní Loingsigh, ‘Main Street South, Cork’. 22 L. Simpson, *Director’s findings, Temple Bar West* (Dublin, 1999), p. 11. 23 Hill and Evans, ‘Model for classification’, pp 237–49. 24 P.F. Wallace, ‘Ireland’s Viking towns’ in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 37–50. 25 P.F. Wallace, ‘The archaeology of Ireland’s Viking-Age towns’ in *NHI*, i, pp 814–42. 26 Hurley et al., *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford*, p. 897. 27 P.F. Wallace, pers. comm.

and begs the question of whether the typology reflects the reality of Viking-Age urban housing. Deetz questions the usefulness of typologies in historical periods where information from other sources can be added to the archaeology.²⁸ While the Viking Age in Ireland is an historical period, the contemporary sources shed no real light on the lives of ordinary people in the emerging towns; therefore a typology is relevant. Although Wallace's typology is based on a range of structural elements, it is, in another way, based only on a single attribute – their construction. It does not take into account building function, places little relevance on the size of a building and does not reflect the relationships between different buildings in one property.

Rather than architectural building types, a more inclusive range of criteria, including the above suggestions, may be better employed to define house types. Finds distributions, soil micro-morphology, phosphate analyses and other analyses could all be incorporated into excavation programmes to aid with this. It is unlikely, however, that many more excavations of the scale of Fishamble Street, Temple Bar West and Peter Street will be carried out or that the building numbers will increase significantly in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the value of a new typology, for its own sake, is questionable when Wallace's functions adequately.

The origins of the Type 1 house

The overwhelming dominance of the Type 1 house (numerically and geographically) means that it is seen as the most important building in Viking Ireland. This is strengthened by its appearance at the earliest excavated levels of urban housing and its persistence in the townscape, unchanged in form, size or outward appearance over four centuries. Yet it is neither a native Irish building form nor a Scandinavian type and its origins are unclear.²⁹ It is in this context that the origins and evolution of this building style are of interest. If its place of origin can be identified, this may shed some light on the particular ethnic and cultural influences at work in the earliest stages of urban formation.

The Type 1 building appears in Dublin in the mid-ninth century as a fully evolved architectural style shortly after the establishment of the *longphort*.³⁰ It dominates until the introduction of the Type 6 house in the twelfth century, but still occurs in the thirteenth century.³¹ The Type 1 houses stand out in Ireland, being rectangular buildings in a country that was previously dominated by roundhouses. Rectangular buildings do appear in eighth- and ninth-century

28 J. Deetz, *In small things forgotten: an archaeology of early American life* (New York, 1996), p. 18. 29 H. Mytum, 'The Vikings and Ireland: ethnicity, identity and culture change' in J.H. Barrett (ed.), *Contact, continuity and collapse: the Norse in the north Atlantic* (Turnhout, 2003), pp 113–37; P.F. Wallace, 'Irish archaeology and the recognition of ethnic difference in Viking Dublin' in J. Habu et al. (eds), *Evaluating multiple narratives: beyond nationalist, colonialist, imperialist archaeologies* (New York, 2008), pp 166–83. 30 Simpson, *Director's findings*, p. 26. 31 Wallace, *Viking-Age buildings*, i, p. 55.

settlements in Ireland, but Wallace initially concluded that the Type 1 house was not directly comparable to any Irish buildings, whether round or rectangular.³² He suggested that it was 'a compromise between Irish building methods, materials and climatic requirements and other dwelling designs, the whole concept having been worked out for a congested urban environment'.³³ Nevertheless, he rejected the potential north European influence because of the existence of aisled rectangular houses in Ireland prior to the Vikings' arrival and the implausibility of the Type 1 house having evolved during the short sixty-year *longphort* phase of Dublin.³⁴ We now know that the Type 1 house appears fully formed in the *longphort* phase:³⁵ it does not evolve there; its origins are not *longphort*-based. Terence Connell's³⁶ survey of native Irish rectangular houses concluded that the indigenous houses and the Type 1 house do not share enough architectural characteristics to be closely related, making an Irish origin for the Type 1 unlikely. Both of Wallace's objections are now unfounded and indeed Wallace himself now believes that the original design of 'this three-aisled house type came from the broader Norse (*sic*) Atlantic area'.³⁷ This is echoed by Hurley, who recently concluded that Type 1 houses in both Cork and Waterford 'were built in an architectural style and to a ground plan derived from a proto-type of Scandinavian origin'.³⁸

Both Hurley and Wallace were influenced by the excavation of broadly similar houses at Kaupang in Norway. Although poorly preserved, the Kaupang buildings share several characteristics with the Type 1 house – similar dimensions, internal roof-supporting posts, end-wall doors, three-aisled divisions and central hearths (pl. 19).³⁹ Skre dates the beginning of the Kaupang series to the early ninth century, but notes that 'the Kaupang buildings pre-date those in Dublin by at least a century'.⁴⁰ This is not entirely true: they pre-date Fishamble Street by a century, but they pre-date the Temple Bar West houses by only fifty years. This is a much closer time frame and is one that could almost establish the two settlements as successors. It certainly raises the possibility of a significant influence from Kaupang in the early stages of Dublin's foundation.⁴¹ Even so, while the Kaupang houses provide the closest parallels to the Type 1 building, they are not identical. The most notable difference is that the Kaupang

32 Ibid., pp 71–4. 33 Ibid., p. 94. 34 Ibid. 35 Simpson, *Director's findings*; L. Simpson, '96E245, excavations at Essex St West/Temple Bar West' (unpublished report lodged with NMS, Dublin, 2002); L. Simpson, 'The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: archaeological evidence from Dublin' in Sheehan and Ó Corráin (eds), *Viking Age*, pp 418–29. 36 T. Connell, 'The relationship between native and Hiberno-Scandinavian house types in Viking-Age Ireland' (MA, UCC, 2006). 37 Wallace, 'Irish archaeology and the recognition of ethnic difference', p. 173. 38 Hurley, 'Viking elements in Irish towns', p. 158. 39 L. Pilo, 'The settlement: character, structures and features' in D. Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal* (Oslo, 2007), pp 191–222. 40 Ibid., p. 217. 41 Certainly Mary Valante considers it likely that there were strong links between ninth-century Kaupang and Dublin (M.A. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), pp 60–4).

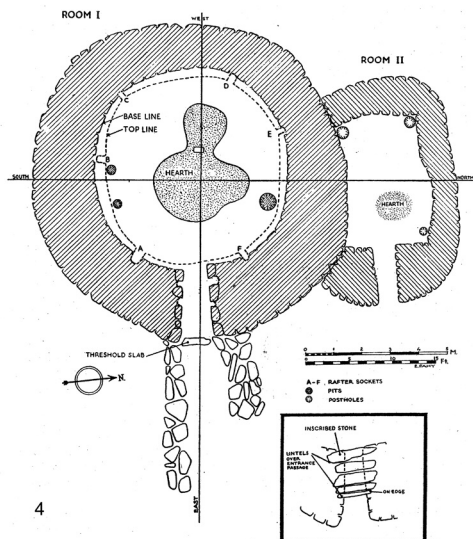
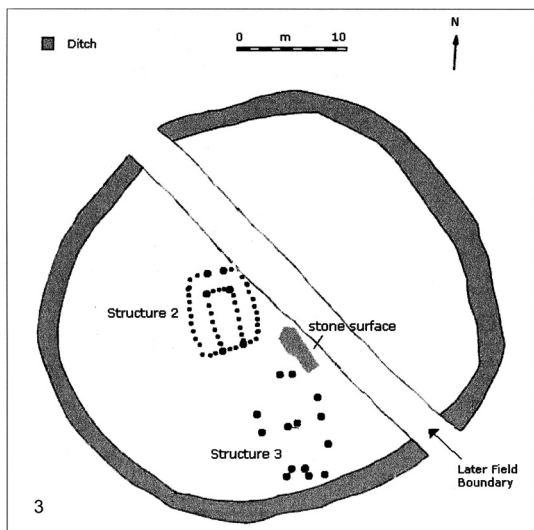
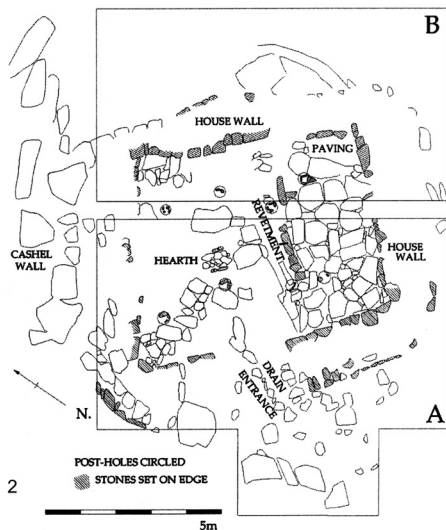
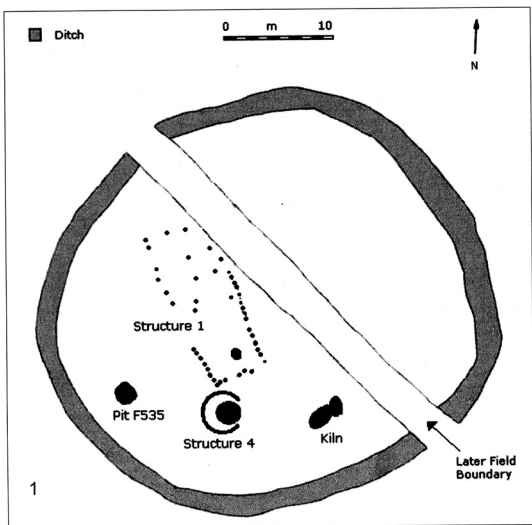
buildings had sill-beam-based walls rather than post-and-wattle walls.⁴² Sill-beam construction does not feature in Irish architecture until Type 6 buildings appear in Waterford in the twelfth century. This difference in materials and methods may represent a distinctly Irish influence on this building style, since post-and-wattle was the commonest construction material in Ireland at this time. Wallace's original suggestion becomes the most likely explanation of the origin of the Type 1 house, as a compromise between Irish building materials and a Scandinavian building design worked out in a rectangular form, which all the occupants of the *longphort*, and subsequently of Irish towns, were comfortable with and accepted.

Rural Viking houses

Turning now to the countryside, these five sites are much less well preserved than their urban counterparts (figs 19.4, 19.5). They date from the ninth to the twelfth century and mix round and rectangular shapes, different construction styles and stone and timber walls. Recently the Gibbons brothers⁴³ have re-examined the nature of the evidence for Scandinavian settlement in the west of Ireland with a view to downplaying its potential. Individually, the different strands of evidence – place-names, artefacts,⁴⁴ landscape settings and historical records – are weak, but researchers such as Kelly and Greene⁴⁵ emphasize their complexity. It is now accepted that there must have been some form of Scandinavian settlement in the wider countryside throughout the Hiberno-Scandinavian period,⁴⁶ but the shape and extent of that settlement is still debated. A closer examination of the standing and archaeological remains of the buildings themselves may help to shed some light on the nature of this settlement.

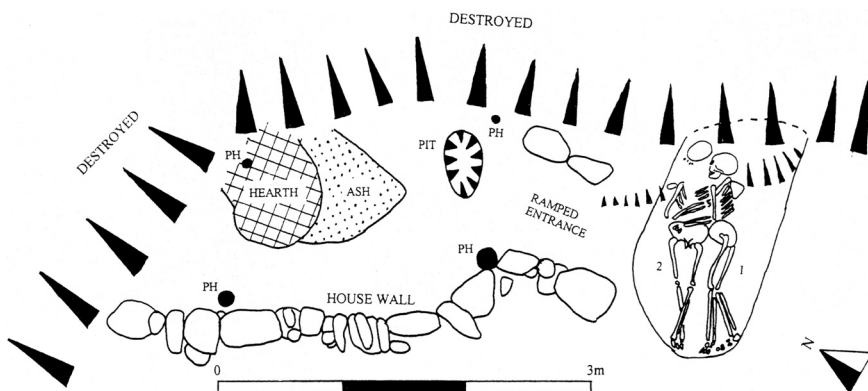
Beginning in Kerry, the site of Beginish has been subject to several reinterpretations since its excavation in the 1950s.⁴⁷ Michael O'Kelly's initial suggestion was for a native Irish farming settlement with signs of a peaceful but limited Viking presence in the artefact assemblage. Sheehan and others⁴⁸ reinterpreted the site as a maritime way station, with a distinct Scandinavian or

42 Pilø, 'Settlement', p. 217. 43 Gibbons and Gibbons, 'Critique of the evidence'; Gibbons and Gibbons, 'Hiberno-Norse ringed pin'. 44 Indeed Richards notes that using artefacts to identify Scandinavian settlement is unusual, at least in an English context (J.D. Richards, 'Identifying Anglo-Scandinavian settlements' in D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards (eds), *Cultures in contact: Scandinavian settlement in England in the ninth and tenth centuries* (Turnhout, 2000), pp 295–309). 45 Kelly, 'Vikings in Connemara'; S.A. Greene, 'Settlement, identity and change on the Atlantic islands of north-west Co. Mayo, c.AD400–1100' (PhD, UCD, 2009). 46 Bradley, 'Reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement', p. 39. 47 M.J. O'Kelly, 'An island settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry', *PRIA*, 57C (1956), 159–93. 48 J. Sheehan et al., 'A Viking-Age maritime haven: a reassessment of the island settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry', *JIA*, 10 (2001), 93–119; Gibbons and Gibbons, 'Critique of the evidence'; Greene, 'Settlement, identity and change'.



19.4 The architecture of the rural sites. Key: 1 – Cherrywood, Structure 1; 2 – The house at Rinnaraw; 3 – Cherrywood, Structures 2 and 3; 4 – Beginish, House 1.

19.5 The house at Truska, Co. Galway.



Hiberno-Scandinavian character, based on the sunken-floored construction style, which they compared to Type 4 buildings and north European *Grubenhäuser*. Nevertheless, sunken-floored construction is not unusual in native Irish contexts in these sandy soils, a point that Sheehan and his colleagues mention⁴⁹ and that Gibbons and Gibbons used to dismiss any possibility of Scandinavian influence at Beginish. In reality, the architecture of House 1 has little in common with either the Hiberno-Norse Type 4 buildings or the north European tradition of *Grubenhäuser*. It is round, not oval or rectangular, and of stone rather than timber or wattle construction. It is rather the artefacts, including a steatite bowl and a runic inscription, that provide the support for a Hiberno-Scandinavian influence here, rather than the building itself.⁵⁰

South of Beginish on Valentia Island, Bray Head was the site of a sizeable early medieval settlement consisting of round and rectangular houses. In 2000 Alan Hayden excavated a large timber, 'sub-rectangular, bow-sided building'.⁵¹ This structure had load-bearing walls and a distinctive bowed shape, as well as an unusual timber-post construction. A short excavation report indicates that the excavator views its closest parallels as originating in the Isle of Man and Scotland. Lacking clear dates, Hayden suggests only that the house represents a Viking presence, hinting that it may date to a time when Viking raiding was prevalent, presumably the ninth century.⁵² The Bray Head house is quite close to Beginish and it is worth reconsidering one of Sheehan's suggestions at Beginish here. He dismisses the possibility that Beginish was founded as a single farmstead (in the manner of Scottish farmsteads), 'because the site lacks the building form and artefact assemblages' usually found there.⁵³ Even so, the Bray Head house may represent just such a farming settlement.

At Cherrywood in south Dublin, excavations revealed three buildings dating from the late ninth to the twelfth century.⁵⁴ The earliest building, Structure 1, has 'apparent bow-sided, roof supporting outer walls'⁵⁵ and an off-centre hearth in its southern half. Ó Néill considers it a possible longhouse, based on its size, construction and proximity to Dublin. Its radiocarbon dates place it earlier than 1020, with artefacts indicating a ninth-century date. Structures 2 and 3 were later rectangular buildings (dating to before 1020 to 1230 and 1020 to 1190 respectively) and may have been contemporary. Structure 2 has an end-wall

49 Sheehan et al., 'Viking-Age maritime haven', 99. 50 Greene, 'Settlement, identity and change', pp 333–5. 51 A. Hayden, '97E278 Ext. Archaeological excavations at Bray Head, Valentia Island, Co. Kerry, 2000 season' (unpublished report lodged with the NMS, 2000).

52 Ibid., p. 7. 53 Sheehan et al., 'Viking-Age maritime haven', 111. 54 J. Ó Néill, 'A Norse settlement in rural County Dublin', *Archaeology Ireland*, 13:4 (1999), 8–10; J. Ó Néill, 'Excavation of pre-Norman structures on the site of an enclosed Early Christian cemetery at Cherrywood, County Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2005* (Dublin, 2006), pp 66–88; J. Ó Néill, '99E0523 preliminary excavation report, Cherrywood, Co. Dublin, Area C' (unpublished report lodged with the NMS, 2000). 55 Ó Néill, 'Excavation of pre-Norman structures', p. 84.

entrance and a three-aisled division created by a single pair of internal roof supports. Structure 3 has a transverse internal partition, forming two internal rooms, and an end-wall entrance.

Structure 2 is often described as a Type 1 house, but it has only one pair of roof supports whereas a Type 1 building should have two.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the post-holes for the doorjambs were substantial and these may have played a greater role than usual in supporting the roof. An area of stone cobbling between these two buildings might represent the remains of a pathway, similar to those in contemporary urban plots, linking the houses. The similarities in construction styles and possibly even property layout and its geographical proximity to Dublin make it extremely likely that, at least in the tenth and eleventh centuries, there was a strong Hiberno-Scandinavian element present at Cherrywood.⁵⁷ The ninth-century evidence is less easy to characterize. There is a superficial resemblance to a longhouse, but the argument for a Viking presence has been driven by one artefact found nearby.⁵⁸ This fragment of a whalebone plaque is decorated with a dot-in-circle motif and is similar to one from a boat burial at Scar in Orkney. This extraordinarily well-preserved artefact lends attractive weight to a Viking presence but, on its own, it cannot be taken as definitive proof for such a presence.

Moving north to Donegal, a cashel enclosure excavated in the 1980s revealed a single, rectangular ninth-century structure at Rinnaraw.⁵⁹ The house is relatively well preserved and its internal features included a kerbed hearth, a possible sleeping platform, a side-wall doorway and internal roof supports. This particular combination of architectural features has no close structural similarities with any contemporary Irish sites. Its best parallels in terms of size, shape and internal layout are houses from the ninth-century site of Buckquoy on Orkney.⁶⁰ Two other factors also point to Scottish influences at Rinnaraw: the presence of trough querns – a typically Scottish quern type – and evidence for cod fishing – a practice traditionally associated with the Norse diet and economy there.⁶¹ Fanning suggested that the paved platform may represent an animal pen and called the house a ‘byre-house’, but Iestyn Jones disagrees with this.⁶² This building stands out among the five houses as possessing a higher level of internal definition as well as these potential Scotto-Norse connections. Indeed, analysis of the internal organization of the Rinnaraw house shows that the layout and movement patterns within this house are reminiscent of some Hiberno-Norse Type 1 houses.⁶³

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85. ⁵⁷ Bradley, ‘Reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement’, p. 48.

⁵⁸ Ó Néill, ‘Excavation of pre-Norman structures’, p. 85. ⁵⁹ M. Comber, ‘Tom Fanning’s excavations at Rinnaraw Cashel, Portnablagh, Co. Donegal’, *PRIA*, 106C (2006), 67–124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 106. ⁶¹ J.H. Barrett, ‘Fish trade in Norse Orkney and Caithness: a zoo-archaeological approach’, *Antiquity*, 71 (1997), 616–38. ⁶² Iestyn Jones, pers. comm.

⁶³ Boyd, ‘Viking houses in Ireland and western Britain’, pp 171–2.

In Co. Galway, another sunken-floored structure was excavated from eroding sand dunes at False Bay in Truska.⁶⁴ The remaining evidence indicates that the house was a rectangular, sunken-floored structure built of dry-stone construction. The excavators compared it to the Type 4a structures at Temple Bar West and to unpublished examples from Fishamble Street.⁶⁵ An antler comb fragment from the house floor resembles combs from Limerick and Dublin, and the excavators have suggested a ninth- or tenth-century date for the site. Supporting evidence for a Viking presence includes the potential Old Norse origin for the name Truska in the word *trosc*,⁶⁶ as well as stray finds from the immediate vicinity including pins, a cut antler and a tenth-century strap-tag.⁶⁷ Two burials interred in the entrance ramp provided radiocarbon dates of 680 to 890 and 660 to 870, placing the house's occupation and abandonment in the late ninth century.⁶⁸

More than half the ground plan had been eroded at Truska and it is difficult confidently to align this house with the Type 4a houses on this basis. The house contained a hearth – a feature notably excluded from inside the contemporary Temple Bar West Type 4a houses. As at Beginish, it is unclear whether the sunken-floored architecture is an environmental adaptation to sandy soils.⁶⁹ Certainly on South Uist in Scotland, the sunken flooring in several houses is a native rather than a Scandinavian architectural feature.⁷⁰ Finally, the excavators themselves note that in each case the key artefact (the comb) is 'a native Irish early medieval type',⁷¹ but from Hiberno-Scandinavian contexts.

VIKING OR HIBERNO-SCANDINAVIAN?

The tendency has been to call all these sites 'Viking' rural settlements, despite their occupation into the twelfth century and the standard division of other ninth- to twelfth-century remains into early Viking and late Hiberno-Scandinavian phases. It may be of benefit to look at the context in which these sites have stood out and to examine more closely what is meant by 'Hiberno-Scandinavian' culture and architecture.

Bradley himself emphasized that the existence of a common Hiberno-Scandinavian culture should make 'it virtually impossible to identify archaeologically a rural "Scandinavian" rather than a rural "Irish" settlement'.⁷² This

⁶⁴ Gibbons and Kelly, 'Viking-Age farmstead in Connemara'. ⁶⁵ Ibid., 30. ⁶⁶ An Old Norse borrowing into Irish meaning 'cod' (ibid.). Again, the Gibbonses dispute this interpretation (Gibbons and Gibbons, 'Critique of the evidence', 58–60). ⁶⁷ Kelly, 'Vikings in Connemara', p. 180. ⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 179. ⁶⁹ Gibbons and Gibbons, 'Critique of the evidence', 37. ⁷⁰ N. Sharples and M. Parker Pearson, 'Norse settlement in the Outer Hebrides', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 32:1 (1999), 41–63. ⁷¹ Gibbons and Kelly, 'Viking-Age farmstead in Connemara', 30. ⁷² Bradley, 'Interpretation of Scandinavian settlement', p. 60.

situation is not unique to Ireland. Julian Richards has noted similar difficulties in identifying Anglo-Scandinavian rural settlement in England.⁷³ Perhaps the problem in Ireland arises from trying to establish the Viking nature of these settlements rather than exploring them as Hiberno-Scandinavian ones. Gibbons and Gibbons make the relevant point that Bradley's original definition has been distorted. The current usage of the term implies 'a distinct cultural group separate and identifiably distinct from the Irish population',⁷⁴ which is something quite different from the common cultural backdrop that Bradley originally envisioned. If we revert to Bradley's original explanation of the term, it is possible that we might be able to gain a clearer view of the nature of rural settlement.

Firstly, Truska should be disregarded on grounds that the evidence is tempting but inconclusive. Not enough of the structure remains to identify its construction type. Similarly, the unpublished site at Bray Head must be regarded as uncertain, at least until radiocarbon dates can confirm the age of the house. Using Bradley's original definition of the term, both Beginish and Cherrywood exhibit a distinct Hiberno-Scandinavian character in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They each display Irish and Norse elements in their architecture, artefacts and setting. Together, these combine to create an expression of a shared culture across these sites and their occupants, rather than making statements that they are consciously and ethnically distinct from their neighbours. This fits well with the established time frame for the emergence of a Hiberno-Scandinavian culture from the tenth century onwards.

On the other hand, neither Rinnaraw nor Structure 1 at Cherrywood fits into this picture. Both of these structures are ninth century and so are too early to be Hiberno-Scandinavian. Nevertheless, they do not resemble the only other known ninth-century Viking housing (Levels 5, 6 and 7 at Temple Bar West). The complex at Rinnaraw most closely resembles the single farmsteads found in Viking Scotland and in Iceland rather than the Hiberno-Norse Type 1 house. Rinnaraw has architectural and artefactual links to Scandinavia (mediated though Scotland) and is enclosed within a stone wall. Similarly Structure 1 at Cherrywood may also have connections with Scotland (through the plaque) and Scandinavia (in its bowed wall shape). Both sites seem to imply a distinctly Scandinavian architectural influence – that of the longhouse – rather than existing within a mixed Irish and Scandinavian milieu. These two sites may hint at a short-lived attempt to establish a rural Viking way of life similar to that found in Orkney, Shetland and the north Atlantic. The building of longhouses is a clear statement of Scandinavian origins and affiliation on the part of the household. Concurrently, an alternative process of urbanization and hybridization was occurring in Dublin, where both Vikings and natives were living in

⁷³ Richards, 'Identifying Anglo-Scandinavian settlements', p. 302; J.D. Richards, *Viking-Age England* (Stroud, 2007), pp 109–25. ⁷⁴ Gibbons and Gibbons, 'Critique of the evidence', 29.

close proximity and were developing a hybrid instrumental identity that was becoming Hiberno-Scandinavian.

Viking architectures and Viking identities

A recurring motif across Britain and Ireland is a tendency to call certain architectural characteristics 'Scandinavian' and to use this to indicate a Scandinavian settlement. Nevertheless, this is usually noted briefly and without any consideration of local or regional comparanda. Mark Redknap⁷⁵ summed up these characteristics in relation to the complex site at Llanbedrgoch in Wales as follows: a rectangular building shape; sunken-floored or sill-beam construction; the presence of raised platforms or benches against walls; a large central hearth; and internal pavements. While all of these elements do occur in Scandinavian architecture, none is uniquely Scandinavian.

The most obvious of these is a rectangular building plan. In Scotland the introduction of rectangular architecture still appears to mark the arrival of a new influence and, in conjunction with a contemporary change in material culture, one that is associated with Scandinavia from the tenth century onwards.⁷⁶ It may be that ninth-century settlement (even in the Northern Isles) was marked by a period of acculturation and that, by focusing on the abrupt change from round to rectangular buildings, more subtle changes (such as the reuse of existing buildings at Old Scatness)⁷⁷ may have been overlooked. This may explain the apparent ninth- and early tenth-century settlement gaps in the Scottish Viking Age. The Irish picture is also complex, with both Scandinavian and Irish influences at play in the Hiberno-Norse building assemblage. Native Irish architecture is predominantly round in form, but rectangular buildings appear in relatively large numbers in native settlement contexts from the ninth century onwards, usually replacing roundhouses.⁷⁸ The recent excavations at Drumclay crannog in Co. Fermanagh showed rectangular buildings pre-dating roundhouses, but details as yet are limited.⁷⁹ Both of the known ninth-century buildings that display some indirect Scandinavian influence (Structure 1 at Cherrywood and Rinnaraw) are rectangular, which may lend some weight to the

⁷⁵ M. Redknap, 'Viking-Age settlement in Wales and the evidence from Llanbedrgoch' in J. Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home: proceedings of a conference on Viking-period settlement, at Cardiff, July 2001* (Leeds, 2004), pp 139–75. ⁷⁶ J.H. Barrett, 'Beyond war or peace: the study of culture contact in Viking-Age Scotland' in Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home*, pp 207–17; J.H. Barrett, 'Culture contact in Viking-Age Scotland' in Barrett (ed.), *Contact, continuity and collapse*, pp 73–111. ⁷⁷ S.J. Dockrill et al., *Excavations at Old Scatness, Shetland, volume 1: the Pictish village and Viking settlement* (Lerwick, 2009). ⁷⁸ I. Jones, *The use of social space in early medieval Irish houses with particular reference to Ulster* (Oxford, 2012); T. Nicholl, 'Houses, dwellings and daily life in early medieval Ireland: perspectives from archaeology, history and experimental archaeology' (PhD, UCD, 2011); A. O'Sullivan and T. Nicholl, 'Early medieval settlement enclosures in Ireland: social identity, dwelling practices and domestic life', *PRIA*, 111C (2011), 55–90. ⁷⁹ N. Bermingham et al., 'Drumclay: a most surprising crannog', *Archaeology Ireland*, 27:2 (2013), 37–40.

argument that building a rectangular house is indicative of Scandinavian influence.

Sunken-floored and sill-beam construction styles are also offered as evidence of Scandinavian origin. North European *Grubenhäuser* are usually sunken-floored, but these are outbuildings rather than the main structure, as at Truska and Beginish. Sunken-floored building traditions occur in both Irish and Scottish machair (fertile, low-lying, coastal plains), since environmental conditions make this the most suitable building style. Sill-beam construction also occurs in Scandinavia,⁸⁰ but this method of building does not become common in Ireland until the twelfth century. At that time, when there was a broader awareness of building traditions thanks to trading connections, its Scandinavian origin is questionable. In England, Mark Gardiner notes that increasing numbers of buildings with variants of sill construction are being recognized from as early as the ninth century⁸¹ and it is unclear whether or not this pre-dates Scandinavian influences. Neither sunken flooring nor sill-beam construction can be considered definitive evidence of Scandinavian building styles.

Redknap's three other characteristics can be considered together, that is to say, large rectangular central hearths, raised side aisles and internal paving. Because of poor preservation, it is difficult to assess the exact nature of the interiors of most buildings. In the absence of clear, datable native comparisons, it is also difficult to assess whether or not these features (which, it must be admitted, are not unique in themselves) are imports or common architectural features. Certainly, all three features are present in native Irish roundhouses, albeit in a slightly different form. Common sense would seem to preclude individual elements being used as evidence for a Scandinavian influence in building tradition, as indeed Redknap himself notes.⁸²

The final feature is bow-sided wall shape. Redknap did not include this characteristic, but this shape has long been associated with Scandinavian longhouses. In Scandinavia, Giuseppe Maiorano and Jochen Komber⁸³ both liken it to that of a longship, while in Iceland, Karen Milek⁸⁴ suggests that bowed walls symbolize the curved horizons of the world in Old Norse cosmology. Richards identifies English 'Viking halls' such as Cheddar, Goltho, Sulgrave and St Neots as closely related to the bowed, aisled halls from tenth-century Danish

80 H. Hamerow, *Early medieval settlements: the archaeology of rural communities in north-west Europe, 400–900* (Oxford, 2002), p. 27. 81 M. Gardiner, 'Timber buildings without earth-fast footings in Viking-Age buildings' in Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home*, pp 345–58.

82 Redknap, 'Viking-Age settlement in Wales', p. 167. 83 G. Maiorano, 'Viking-Age ships as roofing structures in ship-shaped houses and their contribution to the origin of the Gothic architecture' in G. Guðmundsson (ed.), *Current issues in Nordic archaeology* (Reykjavík, 2004), pp 79–84; J. Komber, 'Viking-Age architecture in space and time' in J. Klápště (ed.), *The rural house from the migration period to the oldest still standing buildings ...* (Prague, 2002), pp 13–29.

84 K.B. Milek, 'Houses and households in early Icelandic society: geoarchaeology and the interpretation of social space' (PhD, University of Cambridge, 2006).

sites such as Vorbasse, Ömgård and Saedding.⁸⁵ There are only two datable bow-sided buildings in Ireland (CP300/1, from Christchurch Place, Dublin, and Structure 1, Cherrywood). The Bray Head house is not clearly dated. Another hall may have existed at South Great George's Street in Dublin,⁸⁶ but the exact lines of the walls could not be traced. This hall-type structure measured at least 10 m long and was much larger than a Type 1 house.⁸⁷ A further three extremely large, bow-sided halls are known from the Irish Sea region, all from initial settlement contexts.⁸⁸ In Scandinavia, unusually large buildings are often considered to be communal buildings combining ritual, political and economic functions: for example, at Borg and Husaby in Norway and Hofstaðir in Iceland.⁸⁹ The Cherrywood and South Great George's Street buildings are both from ninth-century contexts and are unusually large buildings. They may represent Scandinavian-style halls in Ireland's earliest settlement contexts, indicating close links to Scandinavia and a 'Viking' way of life. CP300/1 is an elaborate early eleventh-century home, but its occupants may have made a conscious choice to incorporate bowed walls into this building as an archaic link to a Viking past, much in the way that the chieftain at Borg in Norway did.⁹⁰

Overall, it seems that only one or two of Redknap's characteristics may be truly indicative of Scandinavian influence. Bow-sided walls are probably the most reliable indicators, while sill-beam construction and rectangular building shape may also be suggestive. Without further native comparanda, these cannot be regarded as specifically Scandinavian architectural characteristics. Individually, a house exhibiting just one or two of these attributes cannot be ascribed confidently to a Scandinavian influence. If, however, such a house also presented with firm ninth- to twelfth-century dates and a series of artefacts of Scandinavian type (such as steatite vessels, Hiberno-Scandinavian dress pins, or Scandinavian-derived art styles), then that house might be reassessed as having some Scandinavian influence. Ultimately, architecture on its own is rarely enough confidently to ascribe a Scandinavian influence to a house.

Building styles and cultural identities

The importance of ascribing Scandinavian influence goes beyond the simple presence of Vikings at a site at one point in time. Architecture and building styles are a crucial expression of ethnicity and cultural identity in Viking-Age

85 Richards, 'Identifying Anglo-Scandinavian settlements', pp 300–3. 86 L. Simpson, 'Viking warrior burials in Dublin: is this the *longphort*?' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 11–62.

87 *Ibid.*, pp 48–50. 88 These are two timber houses from Mound 2, Bornish, South Uist (M. Parker Pearson et al., *South Uist: archaeology and history of a Hebridean island* (Stroud, 2004), pp 133–4) and Building 1 at the Braaid on the Isle of Man (P.S. Gelling, 'Re-excavation of a Viking house at the Braaid', *Journal of the Manx Museum*, 6 (1964), pp 201–5). 89 G. Lucas, *Hofstaðir excavations of a Viking-Age feasting hall in north-eastern Iceland* (Reykjavik, 2009); G.S. Munch et al., *Borg in Lofoten: a chieftain's farm in north Norway* (Trondheim, 2003); Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal*. 90 Munch et al., *Borg in Lofoten*, pp 284–5.

Scandinavia and the north Atlantic, in particular the longhouse itself. Some have speculated that the occurrence of this standardized longhouse across most of north-western Europe implies an importance attached to this particular architecture.⁹¹ The timber and turf longhouse is a crucial expression of Scandinavian origins, lifestyles and power – a statement of ‘Viking-ness’: this is why this wooden, uneconomical structure appears consistently across the treeless north Atlantic. It is, however, absent in Ireland.

Burmeister⁹² argues that architecture is a key element in the creation of new, migrant identities. Migrants prioritize functional traits in their new environments, but will accept the social traits of the dominant social group. Iceland, Greenland and the Faeroes were uninhabited prior to the Norse arrival and, as Barrett has pointed out, the Northern Isles followed a more primordial⁹³ pattern of acculturation, with the Norse elements dominating and almost erasing the native ones. Hence, the longhouse appears in those regions where the Scandinavian population was socially dominant. In the rest of the British Isles, however, something different happened, that is to say, a hybridization process. Barrett calls this a process of ‘acculturation’ in western Scotland,⁹⁴ but this process extends across the rest of western Britain and into Ireland. Griffiths suggests that the entire Irish Sea region was characterized by ‘enclaves of Viking settlement’,⁹⁵ which had an admixed population but were ruled by a Norse elite. Griffiths then argues that the Viking Age in the Irish Sea shows ‘patterns of instrumentalist acculturation, [and] the active promotion of carefully combined cultural messages in order to create a new and more universal cultural context’.⁹⁶ He envisions the Irish Sea as a melting pot of cultural influences ruled over by Norse leaders who manipulated the material culture for their own ends. One would then expect to see the traditional Scandinavian longhouse appearing in or near these enclaves (as it is such a classic statement of cultural belonging), but definitive evidence for such a longhouse is still absent.

While it is possible that Scandinavian longhouses remain to be discovered in Ireland, given the diversity of settlement remains this is unlikely. It is more likely that Scandinavian longhouses simply were not built in the Irish Sea region in the

91 A.-C. Larsen and S. Stummann Hansen, ‘Viking Ireland and the Scandinavian communities in the north Atlantic’ in Larsen (ed.), *Vikings in Ireland*, pp 115–26. 92 S. Burmeister, ‘Archaeology and migration: approaches to an archaeological proof of migration’, *Current Anthropology*, 41:4 (2000), 539–67. 93 The terms ‘primordial’ and ‘instrumental’ in relation to social and personal identity were introduced by Siân Jones in *The archaeology of ethnicity: constructing identities in the past and present* (London, 1997). ‘Primordial’ relates to an understanding of identity as a fixed and unchanging thing, ascribed at birth through belonging to a distinct social category such as race or social class. ‘Instrumental’ identities are viewed as fluid and flexible, incorporating multiple factors and defined by one’s self in relation to current needs. 94 Barrett, ‘Beyond war or peace’; Barrett, ‘Culture contact in Viking-Age Scotland’. 95 D.W. Griffiths, ‘Settlement and acculturation in the Irish Sea region’ in Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home*, pp 125–38. 96 *Ibid.*, pp 133–4.

Viking Age. Instead, the architecture (such as the Type 1 house) represents compromises between native and Scandinavian building styles. In England, Richards has concluded that the so-called Viking halls such as those at Cheddar and Goltho represent a hybrid form of native and Scandinavian architecture. Hamerow⁹⁷ alluded to the possibility that there was simply not enough 'social capital' available to fifth- and sixth-century Anglo-Saxon households in England to build large longhouses and this may also apply to the ninth- and tenth-century Scandinavian populations. If the resident Norse element in this region was confined to the upper echelons of society and the ruling classes, as Griffiths suggests, they may not have been able to command the materials, supplies and manpower necessary to construct the same types of building as in Scandinavia. Instead, they may have manipulated other forms of material culture that they could use to express their cultural identity.

The ruling elite would, through patronage, have been in a position to influence art and spur the development of hybrid art styles. Other researchers have explored how artistic motifs, particularly in stone sculpture and metalwork, may have been used by the elite of the Irish Sea region to convey a hybrid cultural identity.⁹⁸ This top-down patronage, however, would have had little impact on daily life or the material culture of the majority of the population. This accounts for the lack of distinctive 'Norse' features in the architecture of the region, while still allowing room for the melding of cultural influences noted in the artistic styles of the time. It seems that, in Ireland and western Britain, the role that architecture played in expressing the identity of its inhabitants changed, just as that identity changed. This also accords with some of Richards' conclusions about England's Viking halls. He concludes that the lack of traditional longhouses or specifically Norse architectural features is a sign of 'new socio-economic relations'.⁹⁹ Yet Richards' contention that there was 'no reason [for the Vikings] to import their own'¹⁰⁰ architectural styles may not give the full picture. It is more likely that the importance attached to architecture and building styles shifted during the evolution of these new relationships. The *de rigueur* Viking longhouse¹⁰¹ was replaced by hybrid building styles, incorporating elements of native and Viking construction and layout. If the architecture of a community reflects the cultural identity of that community, the architecture in Ireland reflects a hybrid cultural identity, characterized by variation and integration.

⁹⁷ Hamerow, *Early medieval settlements*, p. 51. ⁹⁸ D.W. Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea* (Stroud, 2010); G. Thomas, 'Anglo-Scandinavian metalwork from the Danelaw: exploring social and cultural interaction' in Hadley and Richards (eds), *Cultures in contact*, pp 237–55; D. Stocker, 'Monuments and merchants: irregularities in the distribution of stone sculpture in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire in the tenth century' in Hadley and Richards (eds), *Cultures in contact*, pp 179–212. ⁹⁹ Richards, *Viking-Age England*, p. 109. ¹⁰⁰ Ibid. ¹⁰¹ Barrett, 'Culture contact in Viking-Age Scotland', p. 98.

Viking-Age domestic settlement at 26–29 Castle Street, Dublin: a preliminary view based on archaeological excavations

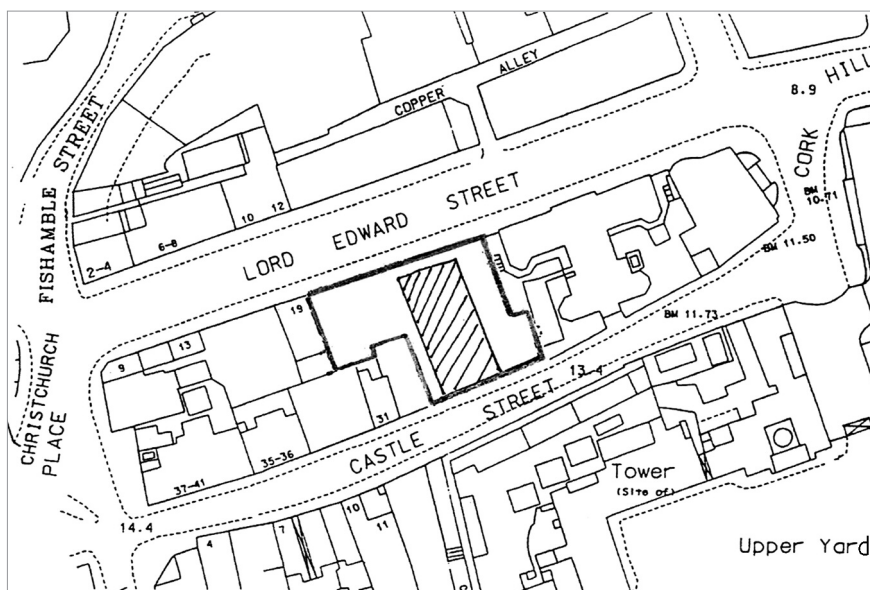
MARTIN BYRNE

Archaeological excavations were undertaken at 26–29 Castle Street/20 Lord Edward Street, Dublin, between June 1992 and April 1993. The excavations were carried out in advance of the construction of two apartment blocks, one fronting on to Castle Street and the other on to Lord Edward Street.¹ The development incorporated an underground car park, the construction of which necessitated the archaeological excavation of an area measuring approximately 480m².

The site is located within the heart of the Viking-Age town and later medieval city, between Christ Church Cathedral and Dublin Castle. It straddles a 30m-long strip of land between Castle Street and Lord Edward Street (fig. 20.1). The excavation established that Castle Street was originally constructed in the Viking Age. The construction of Lord Edward Street in the 1880s necessitated the levelling of a relatively wide corridor of land running east from the top of Fishamble Street to the junction of Cork Hill and Dame Street. This work resulted in the removal of the later medieval (c. 1200–1600) archaeological strata from the areas in question. The same is true of work associated with the construction of nineteenth-century houses with basements along the present line of Castle Street. However, pre-development borehole investigations by Andy Halpin, during his tenure as city archaeologist, indicated that approximately 3m in depth of undisturbed stratified archaeological deposits remained intact below the modern ground surface.

The archaeological recommendation attached to the grant of planning permission for the development of the site called for the excavation of an area measuring approximately 30 by 10m. However, the width was later increased to 16m at the request of the site developer since this was the maximum lateral extent of the proposed basement car park. For logistical purposes, as well as problems associated with the construction of the eastern gable wall of an adjoining property on Castle Street (no. 30), the site was subdivided into three adjoining areas, all within the confines of the proposed car park. Furthermore,

¹ M. Byrne, '26–29 Castle Street/20 Lord Edward Street, Dublin', *Excavations 1992* (1993), 18–19; M.E. Byrne, '26–9 Castle Street/adjoining 19 Lord Edward Street, Dublin', *Excavations 1993* (1994), 15–16. This excavation was carried out under excavation licence 92E077.



20.1 Site location at Castle Street, Dublin.

after consultations with the city archaeologist and representatives of the National Monuments Service (OPW) and the National Museum of Ireland, it was decided that a 3m-wide strip, running along both the edge of Castle Street and the gable wall of the adjoining property, would remain intact, primarily for safety reasons, until after the end of the excavation. The required ground reductions in these strips were subsequently undertaken by mini-digger under the supervision of the site director and senior supervisor. Consequently, the dimensions of the three excavation areas were for area one 16 by 10m, for area two 13 by 4.5m and for area three 13 by 12m. The excavation was concentrated initially in area one along the Lord Edward Street frontage, following which the other areas were excavated in a consecutive manner.

The excavation was carried out primarily to record and recover all archaeological information and material within the confines of the proposed basement car park. The main research aim of the excavation, however, was to record the relationships between the expected structures, their internal features and the associated external features such as property boundaries, pathways, cess pits and rubbish pits, as well as the recording and recovery of archaeological finds and other material. The identification of the earliest phase of activity, in addition to structural establishment, was of prime importance, as were the recovery and identification of associated artefactual material. In addition, the recovery, processing and ultimate examination of a wide range of faunal and archaeobotanical remains were also of primary concern.

The remains of a large number of features, structures and deposits were uncovered during the excavation. These include Viking-Age houses; property boundaries in the form of wattle fences and ditches; and paths, pits and other ancillary structures. The preliminary analysis indicates that there were between seven and eight distinct phases of habitation activity represented on the site, largely located in the southern and central areas. Owing to later modern activities, however, only five habitation layers were encountered in the northern area (one) of the site. In addition, a large number of artefacts were also recovered.

FINDINGS

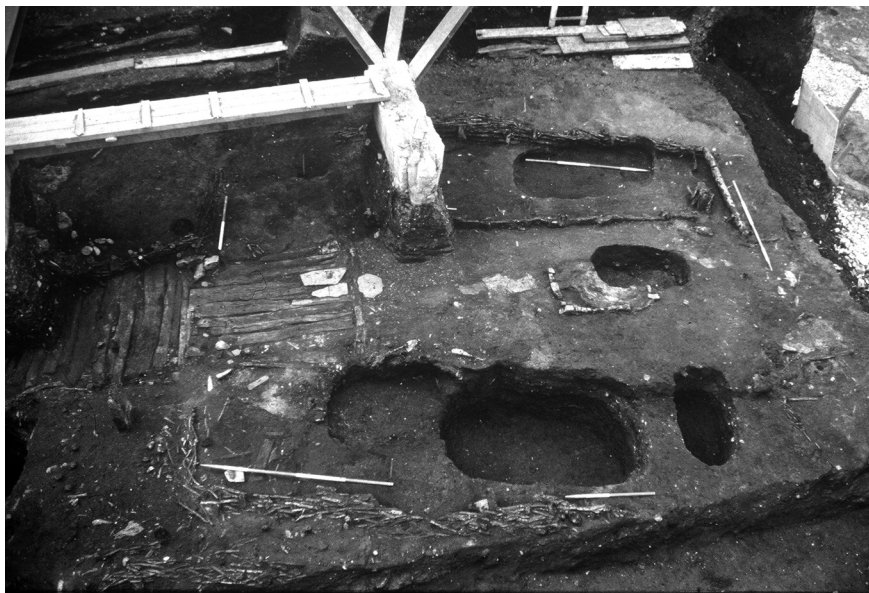
Viking-Age houses

The foundation remains of a number of houses were uncovered during the course of the excavation, the majority of which were concentrated in the southern half of the site. The dating sequence of these buildings appears to range from the last quarter of the tenth century through to the latter half of the twelfth century. All were rectangular in plan with average dimensions of 8.2 by 5.5m. All had post-and-wattle sides and ends except one, which appeared to have incorporated stave-built side walls as part of its construction. Many of the structures had evidence of sharp bones deliberately woven into the lowest strands of the wattle walls. These bones may have acted as deterrents to rodents gnawing at, or through, the wattle walls.

Every structure had evidence of internal roof supports in the form of large posts, and many also had evidence of auxiliary supports deployed either inside, or as part of, the side walls. The doorways of each building were located in the northern and southern walls and had an average width of 1m.

The floor spaces in the houses were divided into three longitudinal strips. The floor of the central aisle, or 'nave', generally comprised trampled surfaces of gravel, woven wattle mats or wood shavings, and one example was finished with small paving stones. Evidence for central hearths was recovered from the majority of the structures, but only those associated with the earlier phases of habitation were of the stone-lined variety. Many of the structures appeared to have side aisles, which were normally divided off from the central aisle by means of low post-and-wattle kerbs running longitudinally between the internal roof supports. These side areas, in general, consisted of a matrix of brushwood and wood-chip under-layers, which were in turn covered by a soft grassy, or straw-like material, and occasionally by woven wattle mats. Many examples indicated a deliberate demarcation between bedding and storage areas. All of the houses had relative characteristics and have been classified as Type 1 after Wallace.²

² P.F. Wallace, *The Viking-Age Buildings of Dublin*, 2 pts (Dublin, 1992), pt 1, pp 9–13.



20.2 House CLE3A at Castle Street, Dublin (mid-eleventh century?) with north to left of picture.

One example, however, deserves special mention. The foundation remains of a relatively large building (CLE3A), measuring approximately 9 by 6m, were uncovered in a reasonably intact condition. This was the largest of all the buildings found and, besides its considerable size, it was different from the others in that it incorporated a plank-furnished floor inside its southern doorway (fig. 20.2). Many of the planks, which were aligned north–south along the southern quarter of the structure, showed evidence that they were reused ship timbers. The recovery of a large amount of amber waste indicated that the structure was used for amber working. The building, which appears to date to the mid-eleventh century, is very similar in form to examples from Fishamble Street, namely FS88–90.³

Property boundaries

The width of the archaeological excavation was such that it was reasonable to expect that the area examined would encompass the lateral demarcation limits of at least one full Viking-Age property plot, as well as the partial remains of those adjoining it. The excavation showed this to be true, although the evidence for property boundaries was relatively scanty in comparison to other comparable sites. Only one full property line sequence was identified. This property line ran

³ *Ibid.*, pt 1, pp 178–86; pt 2, pp 164–6.

north–south, approximately 6m from the western extent of the excavation area. Although the full sequence of this line was truncated in a number of places, there was evidence that there was a slight change in both alignment and location of the boundary in the mid-to-late twelfth century. No later property boundaries were uncovered in the eastern side of the excavation area. This had been truncated by the digging of a later ditch by at least the late twelfth century. However, the early sequence of property divisions was uncovered beneath the base of the ditch, the locations of which indicated that the average width of the property plots, during the Viking Age, was 6.2m.

Pits

A large number of rubbish- and cess-pits were uncovered, especially in the northern area of the site. The majority were unlined and produced a range of faunal and archaeobotanical remains. A number of wattle-lined pits were identified as well as two examples lined with horizontal timber planks. These two, tentatively dated to the mid-to-late twelfth century, were quite interesting as there was evidence that the linings were prefabricated and fitted into prepared rectangular pits. Most of the pits were associated and contemporary with the main phases of structural occupation of the site and were positioned to the north of the houses, although in some instances pits were located close to the southern entrance door of the structures. A number of small pits were unearthed that seem to have been cut through the basal ‘garden soil’ layers or directly into the natural subsoil. None of these pits was associated with any structural features and they unfortunately did not produce any material for dating. Stratigraphically, however, these pits are the earliest evidence of settlement within the boundaries of the site.

Development of Castle Street

Many of the buildings uncovered in the southern end of the excavation area had evidence of pathways running from their southern doorways towards Castle Street. There is evidence from the excavation to suggest that the surface level of the ‘street’ remained relatively static for a long period of time, possibly over two hundred years. This evidence comes from a study of the slopes of the various pathways leading from the houses to the street. The surface of the earliest pathway is relatively level and was probably constructed to lie almost flush with the surface of the street. Over time, however, as buildings went out of use and new ones were constructed to replace them, the relative surface level of the habitation area began to rise. As this happened, the associated pathways began to lead down-slope from the buildings. These slopes were fairly gentle at first, but after up to five phases of construction the slopes became more pronounced and steeper. The remains of a timber revetment (fig. 20.3) running along the southern edge of the excavation area seem to be related to the levelling of the street. A later pathway, leading from a house of possible mid-twelfth-century



20.3 Timber revetment along the southern edge of the excavation area at Castle Street, Dublin (to the left of the image).

date, ran directly over the revetment and may be evidence that the surface level of the street was raised around this time.

Ditch

A large linear ditch orientated north–south was one of the largest and, indeed, latest archaeological features uncovered along the eastern side of the excavation area. The depth of the ditch varied from about 1.4m in the south (fig. 20.4) to 2.8m in the north. It was approximately 4m wide at the top, with relatively steep sides tapering to an uneven base 1.3m wide. The fills of the ditch contained artefacts, which were mostly of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, notable among which were ten human skulls, several with their mandibles (fig. 20.5). A preliminary examination of the skulls undertaken by Clare Mullins indicates that all were males, mostly aged between 25 and 35 years. The majority had signs of inflicted trauma by means of edged weapons and all had evidence for decapitation. It is thought that the ditch may relate to activities at Dublin Castle, while preliminary on-site archaeobotanical and soil characterization studies of the basal fills ruled out certain functions for it, including a drain or channel for diverting or carrying water.

Small finds

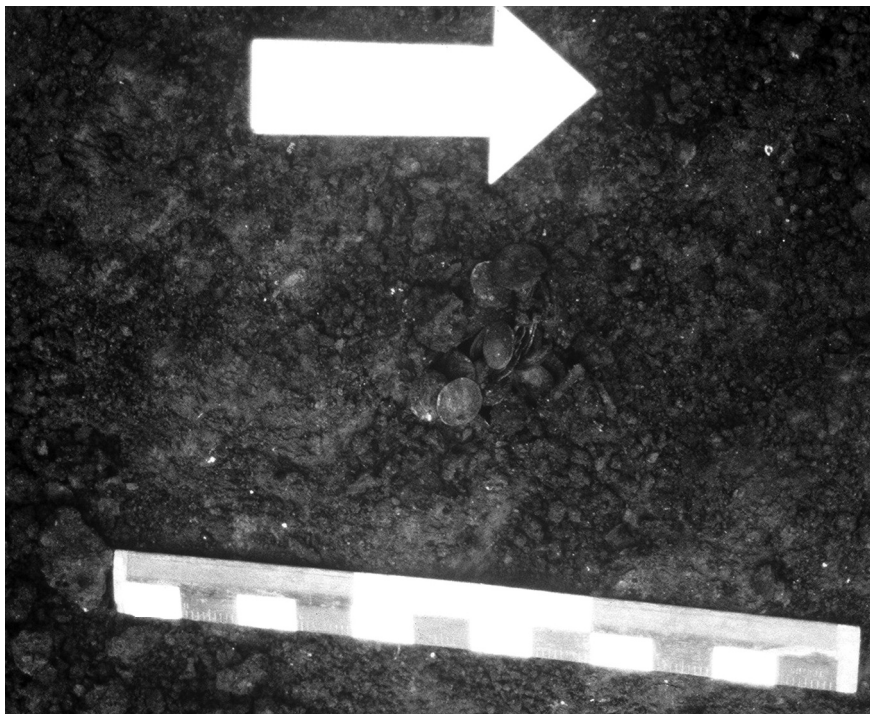
The excavation produced a wealth of artefacts comparable to those recovered from other Viking-Age sites in Dublin. These included domestic items such as



20.4 The southern section of the late twelfth-century ditch at Castle Street, Dublin.

20.5 Human skull from the ditch during excavation at Castle Street, Dublin.





20.6 Coin hoard no. 2 as found at Castle Street, Dublin.

bone combs, needles, timber bowls and platters, wooden and bone gaming-pieces and stamps, weaving swords, spindles and thread winders. Wooden dowels, thatching pegs, awls, pegs, wedges and a possible shovel blade were all used, presumably, in the construction of houses and associated pits. Other finds include weights and balances, stick pins, knife fragments, metal and bone buckles and buttons, fragments of timber barrels and buckets, and of ships' timbers. Ceramic roof tile fragments and twelfth- to thirteenth-century pottery were recovered from the uppermost layers of stratigraphy, including an almost fully intact Leinster cooking ware jar and two Normandy lamps. In addition, two sherds of Samian ware were recovered from the excavations. Future study of this material will add to our existing knowledge of the economy and everyday life of the inhabitants of the site.

The discovery of three separate silver hoards from the earliest phases of occupation, all within the footprint of houses, is particularly significant. The first hoard comprised the remains of two silver torques, the largest and most intact of which may have served as a necklet, as well as an iron torque. The latter may have been used by the silversmith as an inexpensive journey-piece to demonstrate his craft to potential customers.

The second hoard consisted of seventy-nine silver coins and was discovered spread over an area 30cm in diameter. There was evidence that the coins were arranged in rolls under a raised seating or bedding area of a house. Their deposition suggests that the existing ground surface was scraped back, probably in a hurry, and then the coins were set in place and covered with a shallow depth of soil, never to be recovered by the owner. The hoard is described in the next essay by Andrew Woods, who notes that a total of twenty-nine English mints are represented and who dates the hoard to *c.*990.

The third hoard consisted of 242 coins. In this instance the coins were arranged in three rolls and deposited in a small hole beneath a seating or bedding area. The rolls were pushed through the base of the hole before being covered with soil (fig. 20.6). The hoard is also described in the next essay by Woods, who notes that a total of at least forty-three English mints are represented, dating to *c.*995. Both coin hoards were recovered from the earliest phase of domestic habitation uncovered on the site, which is tentatively dated to the late tenth century.

SUMMARY

The earliest structural phase of the site, of late tenth-century date, appears to post-date the earliest phase uncovered on Fishamble Street. This would suggest that the subject area was first occupied during a time when the Viking-Age town was being consolidated and when increases in population resulted in the expansion of domestic occupation.

The habitation plots were, in general, wider than those uncovered at Fishamble Street, as were the houses, which were concentrated close to a possible street frontage to the south. Indeed, the recovery of silver hoards, coupled with relatively larger house sizes, could be interpreted as indicating that the area was one of wealth and affluence. There are indications from the excavation that the surface level of the street remained relatively static down to the mid-twelfth century. The position of property boundaries also appears to have been adjusted at this time; there is evidence from the excavations that the plot boundaries were widened slightly in the early to mid-twelfth century. During the initial phases of occupation the area seems to have been a centre for amber working, but this appears to have ceased by the early twelfth century. Archaeological evidence defining a formal craft activity beyond the domestic character of the site is not present in the later levels.

Many of the suggestions proposed above cannot be validated until the post-excavation process is completed. Work on this is ongoing and, when completed, it will not only complement the results published from other similar excavated sites, but also will further enhance our knowledge of Viking-Age and later medieval Dublin.

Prelude to the Hiberno-Scandinavian coinage: the Castle Street and Werburgh Street hoards

ANDREW WOODS

When a succession of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dubliners buried the Castle Street (1), Castle Street (2) and Werburgh Street hoards, probably *c.*990 for the former and *c.*995 in the case of the latter two, they did so on the eve of the profound change to the coinage – then consisting almost entirely of pennies from Anglo-Saxon England. They may have done so in ignorance of, or perhaps because of, this change. Either way, shortly after the deposit of these hoards in the mid-990s, Sitriuc Silkenbeard, one of the most successful of Dublin's Hiberno-Scandinavian rulers, had Ireland's first coins struck (fig. 21.1). His decision to strike coins represents an important shift within the numismatic history of the town, the beginning of a 'national' currency in Ireland.¹ While the Castle Street and Werburgh Street hoarders were comfortable using imported Anglo-Saxon silver coinage,² Sitriuc altered the currency to ensure the use of his own coins, which were closely modelled on Anglo-Saxon prototypes, and to exclude those from overseas.³



21.1 *Crux* coin struck for Sitriuc Silkenbeard *c.*995 (© National Museum of Ireland).

1 M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Currency under the Vikings, pt 4: The Dublin coinage, *c.*995–1050', *BNJ*, 78 (2008), 111–37. 2 M.A.S. Blackburn, 'Currency under the Vikings, pt 3: Ireland, Wales, Man and Scotland', *BNJ*, 77 (2007), 129. 3 Blackburn, 'Part 4', 117; A.R. Woods, 'The coinage and economy of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval*

One hundred years previously the overwhelming majority of silver in Ireland had been in the form of whole ornaments, ingots or 'hacksilver'.⁴ By the middle decades of the tenth century there had been fundamental changes in the use of silver with the emergence, in some areas, of a mixed coin and hacksilver 'dual economy'.⁵ It appears that Dublin, and some inland areas beyond, became increasingly accustomed to the use of imported Anglo-Saxon coinage during the tenth century. This is visible in the transformation of hoards from mixed silver to almost exclusively coinage and a growth in the volume of 'single finds' of coins, generally indicative of the greater availability and use of coins.⁶

If it has proved possible to analyse the relationship between bullion and coinage in Ireland in the first half of the tenth century, the interpretation of the emerging coin economy, using imported Anglo-Saxon coins, has proved more elusive. This means that the precise context for the introduction of Sitriuc's coinage in the mid-990s has been difficult to define. This is largely due to the survival of evidence. There is a pronounced peak in Irish hoarding activity between the 950s and the 970s, with more than two dozen coin hoards on record, yet comparatively few hoards from the two decades before Dublin began to issue its own coinage.⁷ Prior to the discovery of the three major Dublin coin hoards discussed here, there were only four coin hoards recorded from Ireland in the period between a major reform of the Anglo-Saxon coinage in c.973 and Sitriuc's decision to strike his coinage in Dublin in the mid-990s. These are the Mullingar (1), Ladestown and Bishop's Lough hoards from Co. Westmeath alongside another from the vicinity of Kildare.⁸ Of these, Ladestown and Bishop's Lough are relatively recent finds of the 1980s, but they are very small, limiting their contribution towards an understanding of the wider economic picture. Furthermore, all of these finds are from well beyond the immediate Dublin vicinity, which meant that the silver economy of the town itself was not visible and could be understood only through inference.

Into this context must be placed three recent coin hoards, now preserved in the National Museum of Ireland. They were found in 1993–4 during the course

Dublin XIII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2011 (Dublin, 2013), pp 57, 66. 4 J. Sheehan, 'Ireland's early Viking-Age silver hoards: components, structure and classification', *Acta Archaeologica*, 71 (2000), 49–63; J. Sheehan, 'The form and structure of Viking-Age hoards: the evidence from Ireland' in J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (eds), *Silver economy in the Viking Age* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2007), pp 149–61. 5 Blackburn describes the situation as a 'de facto coin economy' in Blackburn, 'Part 4', 98. See also K. Bornholdt-Collins, 'The Dunmore Cave [2] hoard and the role of coins in the tenth-century Hiberno-Scandinavian economy' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 19–46; J. Graham-Campbell, 'The dual economy of the Danelaw', *BNJ*, 71 (2001), 49–59. 6 Bornholdt-Collins, 'Dunmore Cave'; A.R. Woods, 'Monetary activity in Viking-Age Ireland: the evidence of the single-finds' in M.R. Allen et al. (eds), *Early medieval monetary history: studies in memory of Mark Blackburn* (Farnham, 2014), pp 295–330. 7 Blackburn, 'Part 3', 127, fig. 3. 8 Ibid., 143. Ladestown is listed as no. 94, 'Co. Westmeath,

of archaeological investigations within the heart of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin. The town had produced only one earlier hoard, found *c.*1870 in the renovations of Christ Church Cathedral, even if modern archaeological investigation has uncovered significant numbers of single coins.⁹ The hoards, comprising nearly 450 coins in total, are noteworthy for the large quantity of new material they provide for analysing this formative period of the late Anglo-Saxon coinage.¹⁰ Their assemblage outside Anglo-Saxon England, where the strict practice of *renovatio monetæ* generally prevented such extensive runs of successive types appearing together, is a particular boon to the numismatist coming to grips with the finer details of the post-reform coinage, and there remains great potential for future studies when the material becomes generally accessible through its publication in the Dublin volume of the *Sylloge of coins of the British Isles* series.¹¹ In an Irish context, the three hoards are most remarkable since they all date to the lacuna that had previously existed in the hoard record, filling the gap of the late 980s and early 990s. Their physical and chronological proximity mean that they hold the potential to illuminate the context in which Sitriuc introduced his coinage in a way that was previously impossible.

THE DUBLIN HOARDS: CONTEXTS AND DATING

The two Castle Street coin hoards were uncovered during archaeological excavations in advance of construction works during 1993.¹² The smaller and earlier hoard, Castle Street (1), contains seventy-nine coins while the other, Castle Street (2), is composed of 242 coins. The area where they were found was determined to be the site of Viking-Age domestic occupation with Type 1 buildings similar to those excavated elsewhere in the town. Three hoards were discovered and it has been suggested by the excavator that they represent some of the earliest activity on the site, although, in advance of full publication, this is unconfirmed. Some of the coins within the hoards were said to have been found in 'rolls' of some kind, perhaps indicating storage in this manner rather than a bag or box.¹³ In addition to the two coin hoards that are the subject of discussion

central'. ⁹ M. Dolley, *Sylloge of coins of the British Isles*, viii: *Hiberno-Norse coins in the British Museum* (London, 1966), pp 75–9. Modern archaeological investigation, however, has uncovered significant numbers of single coins. See Figures 21.2, 21.3 and for a full listing of these see the appendix in Woods, 'Coinage and economy'. ¹⁰ For example, the hoards have already permitted an important contribution in this area with the identification of seven new moneyers in the *Benediction Hand* type providing evidence that it was indeed a substantive type, rather than a subtype, in Æthelred II's system of recoinages (K. Bornholdt-Collins and E. Screen, 'New moneyers in Æthelred II's *Benediction Hand* type', *BNJ*, 77 (2007), 270–6). ¹¹ K. Bornholdt-Collins and A.R. Woods, *Sylloge of coins of the British Isles: National Museum of Ireland, Dublin*, forthcoming. ¹² Byrne, this volume. ¹³ Coins in this formation are also known from two Manx hoards of similar date – the near contemporary Bradda Head hoard (*c.*995) and the Peel Castle hoard (*c.*1050): see W.B. Dickinson, 'Find of Anglo-Saxon coins

in the current context, a hacksilver hoard was recovered. This other hoard is of some importance since it is likely to be the first hacksilver hoard found in the town of Dublin. Its close proximity to the two coin hoards suggests that there is still much to be gleaned about the relationship between coinage and hacksilver, and even at this comparatively late date in the heart of the town that some traces of the 'dual economy' persisted.

The Werburgh Street hoard was recovered during archaeological investigations in 1994.¹⁴ A total of 125 coins were found at level 4b on the site, which was found to have a number of buildings, of standard Dublin Type 1, as well as being the site of industrial metalworking. The precise context of the hoard saw it deposited within a layer of organic material associated with a heavily truncated building at the southern end of the site.¹⁵ Given the position of the coins, the excavator has suggested that the coins are likely to have been held within an organic container, likely a bag, that did not survive.¹⁶

Table 21.1 Summary of the composition of the Castle Street (1), Castle Street (2) and Werburgh Street hoards, Dublin.

Type	Date	Castle St. (1)	Castle St. (2)	Werburgh St.
Edgar: <i>Reform Small Cross</i>	c.973–5	5	6	
Edward the Martyr: <i>Small Cross</i>	c.975–8	1	5	
Æthelred II: <i>First Hand/First Small Cross</i>			1	
<i>First Small Cross</i>	c.978–9		1 + Cut ¼?	2
<i>First Hand</i>	c.979–85	54	75	39
<i>Second Hand/First Hand</i>				1
<i>Second Hand</i>	c.985–91	16	13	15
<i>Second Hand/Benediction Hand</i>				1?
<i>Benediction Hand</i>	c.991	3	19	7
<i>Second Hand/Crux</i>			3	1
<i>Benediction Hand/Crux</i>			1	2
<i>Crux</i>	c.991–7		117	56
<i>Scandinavian Imitation</i>				
<i>Crux</i>	c.995			1
Total		79	242	125

in the Isle of Man', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 16 (1853–4), 100; W.A. Seaby, 'The 1982 coin hoard' in D. Freke (ed.), *Excavations on St Patrick's Isle, Peel, Isle of Man, 1982–88: prehistoric, Viking, medieval and later* (Liverpool, 2002), pp 320–5. ¹⁴ A. Hayden, 'The excavation of pre-Norman defences and houses at Werburgh Street' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin III: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2001* (Dublin, 2002), pp 44–68. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 53–4. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

The dating of the three hoards is fairly consistent. Castle Street (1) is the earliest, terminating with coins of Æthelred's *Benediction Hand* type, as can be seen in Table 21.1. Both the Werburgh Street and the Castle Street (2) hoards are strikingly similar, terminating with coins of Æthelred's *Crux* type. Given the types represented within the hoards, it can be suggested that Castle Street (1) be dated to c.990 with the other two hoards dated to c.995. This dating draws on the highly schematic suggestions of Michael Dolley, which have been the subject of much recent criticism.¹⁷ The effect of these criticisms in the context of the Dublin hoards is only limited. The round, *circa* dates reflect this uncertainty and it must be acknowledged that it is possible to date each hoard a few years earlier. While there is some uncertainty regarding precise dates, it can be said that the three hoards were probably deposited between the late 980s and the mid-990s. They were certainly deposited within a few years of one another and represent the silver of Dublin in the period that immediately preceded Sitriuc Silkenbeard's decision to strike coinage in the town.

COINAGE IN CIRCULATION

The new hoards of Dublin provide an opportunity to reassess the extent to which coinage circulated within Dublin and Ireland. Did it arrive in parcels that were quickly buried, or was the money actually being *used*? Central to the discussion of this issue is the consistency of the coinage available to those who hoarded it. If currency is found to be similar across near-contemporary hoards, then it is possible to argue that these hoards drew their coins from a common pool of circulating coinage. In such a case, it would be likely that imported Anglo-Saxon silver was changing hands on a regular basis, leading to the homogenization of this circulating currency.

One means of considering this consistency is through an assessment of the regional patterns of Anglo-Saxon coins. Saxon coins were struck in a network of mints that serviced the whole kingdom. Before a reform of the English coinage in c.973 it is possible to trace the regional origins of coins based on their type and style. After this point, the coins name their mint, enabling greater precision in analyses. In Ireland and the Irish Sea region, research has focused on the pre-973 material, but the post-973 material has received more attention in English contexts with detailed analysis of the many English finds used to consider regional patterns of money.¹⁸ Most recently, Rory Naismith has divided England

¹⁷ See C.S.S. Lyon, 'Anglo-Saxon numismatics', *BNJ*, 73 (2003), 70; B.H.I.H. Stewart, 'Coinage and recoinage after Edgar's reform' in K. Jonsson (ed.), *Studies in late Anglo-Saxon coinage* (Stockholm, 1990), pp 455–86. ¹⁸ See K. Bornholdt-Collins, 'Viking-Age coin finds from the Isle of Man: a study of coin circulation, production and concepts of wealth' (PhD, University of Cambridge, 2003), pp 265–74; D.M. Metcalf, *An atlas of Anglo-Saxon and Norman coin finds, c.973–1086* (London, 1998), pp 191–248.

into ten regions to determine how readily coins circulated within and between these regions.¹⁹

Table 21.2 Comparison of regional distribution of coins within Irish hoards.

Region	Castle St. (1) %	Castle St. (2) %	Werburgh St. %	Mullingar (1) %	Kildare %
Danelaw	3	6	1	5	3
East Anglia	6	6	7	8	3
East Wessex	14	21	16	13	3
Lincolnshire	10	5	8	4	15
London	20	19	28	31	29
North Mercia	8	13	4	7	3
Northumbria	1	4	17	5	15
South-east	15	10	6	6	12
South Mercia	4	3	2	1	0
West Wessex	19	13	11	19	18
Total coins	79	240	123	99	34

The paucity of hoards between 973 and 995 has made analysis of this type difficult in Ireland in the past, but the Dublin hoards allow for a reassessment. The coins from the three Dublin hoards are divided by minting region in Table 21.2, following Naismith's divisions, and compared with two near-contemporary Irish hoards from Mullingar (1) and Kildare.²⁰ When the figures are considered in such a manner, what becomes apparent is their consistency. There are some variations, as would be expected given the small sample sizes involved, but as a whole the general pattern of uniformity must be stressed. Certain regions are found to be consistently high with London, in particular, generally being the most common minting region within the hoards. Other areas are noticeably low – eastern parts of England in particular with few coins from either the Danelaw or East Anglia. The similarity across these five hoards can be explained only by the fact that they all draw upon a fairly well mixed pool of circulating currency. With only a few exceptions, the figures suggested for the average in Table 21.3 are close to the reality for each hoard. Where there are significant discrepancies, these can frequently be explained by reference to die-linked parcels, as discussed below. These hoards seem likely to represent the currency in circulation, with each hoard drawing on a relatively homogenous group of coins. It could also be said that the 'average' figure listed in Table 21.3 is likely to be a fair approximation for the composition of the currency circulating in Dublin in the 980s and

¹⁹ R. Naismith, 'The English monetary economy, c.973–1100: the contribution of single-finds', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 66 (2013), 198–225. ²⁰ R.A. Hall, 'A check-list of Viking-Age coin finds from Ireland', *UJA*, 3rd ser., 36–7 (1974), 78–9.

990s. This picture is reinforced by Mark Blackburn's comparison of the hoards based on the types within them. He determined that types occurred in similar proportions in each hoard, indicating that the separate hoards were drawn from the same currency pool and not imported from diverse origins.²¹

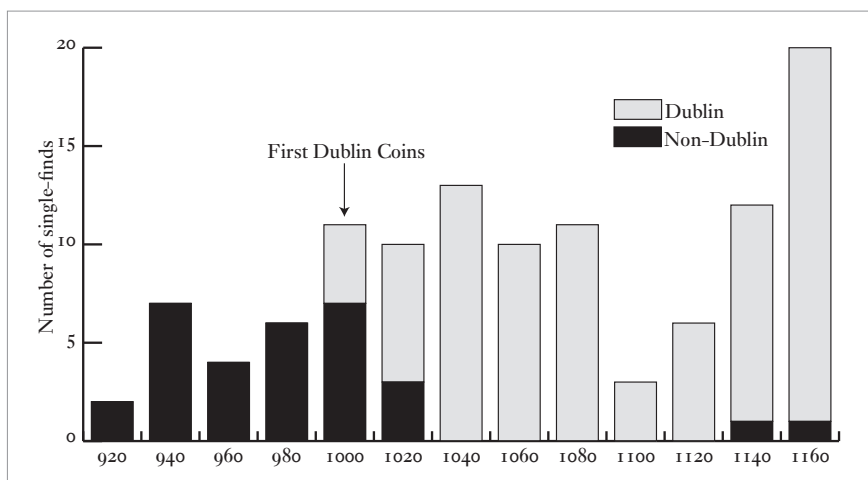
Table 21.3 Comparison of regional distribution in Irish hoards and English single finds.²²

Region	Irish hoards average	English single finds
Danelaw	4%	11%
East Anglia	6%	26%
East Wessex	13%	9%
Lincolnshire	8%	10%
London	26%	8%
North Mercia	7%	6%
Northumbria	8%	7%
South-east	10%	12%
South Mercia	2%	5%
West Wessex	16%	6%

The fact that the Mullingar (1) and Kildare hoards also display similar patterns is of some significance. It suggests that these hoards drew their coins from currency within Dublin, implying regular contact with the town. The small hoards from Bishop's Lough and Ladestown are also significant in this period since their small size is suggestive of the use of coinage in inland areas. They do not represent huge treasures accumulated through raid or gift, but are more likely the size of small purse hoards or everyday usable wealth. The similarity across these areas suggests that silver flowed into Dublin, where it circulated and was mixed together. Some of this was then exchanged inland to an audience, at least in certain areas or for some kinds of transaction, which was comfortable with its use. In sum, the hoards suggest a coin-using economy in the town and beyond.

That the coin hoards are indicative of an active currency in circulation in Dublin concords with the evidence of excavated coins from the town. Dublin represents one of the most extensively excavated early medieval towns in Europe, which has led to the recovery of at least 123 single finds of coinage from the town.²³ This volume of finds is comparable to some of the major towns within

²¹ Blackburn, 'Part 4', 119–20. ²² English single-finds data are drawn from Naismith, 'English monetary economy'. For further discussion of the comparison between these figures, see below. ²³ L. Simpson, 'Fifty years-a-digging: a synthesis of medieval archaeological investigations in Dublin city and suburbs' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2009* (Dublin, 2011), pp 9–112; P.F. Wallace, 'The English presence in Viking Dublin' in M.A.S. Blackburn (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon monetary history:*



21.2 Single finds of coins from Dublin (divided according to place of striking), by twenty-year period.

contemporary north-western Europe, a testament to the extent of skilful excavation, and good survival, of material from early medieval Dublin.²⁴ ‘Single finds’ of coins are generally taken to be representative of the levels of ‘monetary activity’, with larger numbers of coins indicative of greater volumes of silver and/or increased velocity of circulation. The evidence of these single finds is that the hoards were deposited during a period when Dublin was becoming increasingly familiar with the use of coinage. Figure 21.2 displays the single finds dating to between 900 and 1170, divided according to whether they were struck in Dublin or in areas beyond this. In this figure there is a general upward trend during the course of the tenth century, with a peak in the middle of the eleventh century. This suggests an increase in monetary activity – more coinage used on an ever more regular basis. Excavated material suggests that the Dublin hoards were deposited in what was probably the most coin-rich environment that had ever existed in Ireland.

While on the whole the well-mixed aspect of the coins within the hoards must be emphasized, it is possible to see some variation from this. One of the ways in which this can be considered is through a study of the ‘die-links’ within the hoards. Coins in the early medieval period were manufactured by placing a plain silver flan between coin ‘dies’, which were then hammered to create the image on both faces. Each die could produce many coins and, because they were hand-

essays in memory of Michael Dolley (Trowbridge, 1986), pp 202–22. See the appendix in Woods, ‘Monetary activity’ for a full listing of the finds from the town. ²⁴ E.J.E. Pirie, *Post-Roman coins from York excavations, 1971–81* (London, 1986); M. Biddle (ed.), *The Winchester mint* (Oxford, 2012); P. Stott, ‘Saxon and Norman coins from London’ in A. Vince (ed.), *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London: 2. Finds and environmental evidence* (London, 1991), pp 279–325.

engraved, no two were alike. Where two coins are found to have been struck from an identical die, whether top (reverse) or bottom (obverse), they are referred to as 'die-linked'. It is possible to be reasonably confident that die-linked coins were struck almost contemporaneously. Where a number of die-linked coins are present within a hoard, it would tend to suggest that the coins had circulated alongside one another for the whole period between their striking and deposition.

Table 21.4 Number of die-linked coins within the Dublin hoards.

Type	Date	Castle St. (1)	Castle St. (2)	Werburgh St.
Edgar <i>Reform Small Cross</i>	c.973–5		2	
Edward the Martyr <i>Small Cross</i>	c.975–8			
Æthelred II <i>First Hand/First Small Cross</i>				
<i>First Small Cross</i>	c.978–9			
<i>First Small Cross?</i>				
<i>First Hand</i>	c.979–85	15	11	
<i>Second Hand/First Hand</i>				
<i>Second Hand</i>	c.985–91	2		
<i>Second Hand/Benediction Hand</i>				
<i>Benediction Hand</i>	c.991		12	
<i>Second Hand/Crux</i>			3	
<i>Benediction Hand/Crux</i>				2
<i>Crux</i>	c.991–7		45	18
Total		17	73	20

Table 21.4 indicates the number of die-links within the various types represented in the hoards. The table suggests that there is some variability between them. The Werburgh Street hoard has fewer than one in six coins die-linked. This can be contrasted with the Castle Street (2) hoard, where this figure is closer to one in three. Castle Street (1) can be placed between these two figures, with approximately one-quarter of the coins die-linked. There are a number of points that can be drawn from this. The first is that much of the Anglo-Saxon coinage that Dublin had access to in the 990s was fairly well mixed. That there are no die-links between the thirty-nine *First Hand* coins within the Werburgh Street hoard is suggestive of a thoroughly circulated coinage. The fact that the older coins within the hoards are much more mixed than the newer specie would also suggest that the longer that coinage remained in Dublin the more thoroughly circulated it became. Only one-sixth of the older *First Hand* type coins are die-linked in Castle Street (2), which contrasts with over one-third of the newer *Crux* type.

The second point is that, nonetheless, there are some 'old' die-links within the hoards. This is most obvious in the two *Reform Small Cross* coins within the Castle Street (2) hoard. These are likely to be around twenty years old by the time of their deposition, yet the die-link would suggest that they had circulated alongside one another for the whole of this time. A similar argument could be made for the *First Hand* coins in the same hoard. There were clearly parcels of coins being transported across the Irish Sea that were never broken up on their arrival. This serves to make the point that one must not emphasize the velocity of circulation too greatly. While, on the whole, a fairly rapid circulation must be suggested for coinage in Dublin, the hoards also show that it was possible for small groups of coins to remain together for long periods. This is a noteworthy phenomenon and, rather than suggesting these coins did not circulate, it may be indicative of a broader trend where coins were often exchanged in multiples rather than individually. This is difficult to prove, based on such a small sample, but may imply the use of coinage in higher-value transactions rather than the payment of smaller day-to-day needs.

IRELAND AND ENGLAND

The coins within the Dublin hoards also suggest that there was regular and consistent contact with Anglo-Saxon England. The fact that the hoards were composed of exclusively English coined silver is mirrored more widely in Ireland where over 95 per cent of hoarded coins and 100 per cent of single finds from the second half of the tenth century were Anglo-Saxon in origin.²⁵ This relationship with England is also visible in the presence of die-linked 'parcels' within the hoards. Where groups of coins with large numbers of die-links exist within a hoard it is generally suggestive of their being relatively recent additions to the hoard. When these are divided by region, as is visible in Table 21.5, they give an impression of the areas in England where they had recently originated. A number of geographically clustered parcels of coins are visible within the hoards, particularly Castle Street (2). The fairly extensive number of die-links within the Castle Street (2) hoard is in the large part drawn from the north Mercia, east Wessex and London regions with the mints of Chester, Winchester and London forming the bulk of this material. It appears that the hoard had two parcels added to it shortly before it was deposited; one was drawn from the area around Chester while the other was from the south-east of England. Neither parcel had long to circulate, either in England or in Ireland, before it was deposited, otherwise we would not expect to see such concentrations of die-links. Similarly, the generally well-mixed Werburgh Street hoard has a significant concentration of die-linked coins from York. Given the relative paucity of die-

²⁵ Woods, 'Monetary activity'; Hall, 'Checklist of Viking-Age coin finds'.

links and York coins in the hoard more generally, it certainly appears that a group of coins has passed quite quickly from the York mint to be hoarded at Werburgh Street.

Table 21.5 Coins with die-links, divided by region.

Region	Castle St. (1)		Castle St. (2)		Werburgh St.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Danelaw	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%
East Anglia	0	0%	2	3%	3	15%
East Wessex	2	12%	19	26%	2	10%
Lincolnshire	2	12%	0	0%	2	10%
London	2	12%	12	16%	2	10%
North Mercia	3	18%	24	32%	0	0%
Northumbria	0	0%	0	0%	9	45%
South-east	2	12%	7	9%	0	0%
South Mercia	2	12%	2	3%	0	0%
West Wessex	4	24%	6	8%	2	10%
Total	17	100%	74	100%	20	100%

These regions are consistent with the known archaeological and historical evidence for Dublin's traders.²⁶ The corroborating evidence is clearest from Chester and London, both of which see clusters of die-linked coins among the hoards.²⁷ The London link is also quite clearly visible when the Irish hoards and English single finds are compared in Figure 21.4. The English single finds are a record of what might be expected to be typical of the 'average' coins in circulation in England. This overly simplifies the English currency, which was quite different depending on region, but does provide a useful point of comparison. It suggests that London coins are over-represented in the Dublin hoards, which is likely to reflect London's status as one of the foremost trading towns in Europe. Similarly, the relatively large number of coins from the south-west of England in the Dublin hoards is notable, given their relative scarcity in England. It suggests that the trade route through the southern Irish Sea was an important one in the late tenth century, a fact borne out by other archaeological evidence.²⁸ It also foreshadows a strong link between the area and the early phases of the Hiberno-Scandinavian coinage with stylistic influence, dies and moneys moving between the two regions.²⁹ Most other regions are broadly comparable and it is notable that neither north Mercia (including Chester) nor

²⁶ See Wallace, 'English presence'. ²⁷ P.F. Wallace, 'The economy and commerce of Viking-Age Dublin' in K. Düwel et al. (eds), *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa* (Göttingen, 1987), pp 224–5; M.A. Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland: settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), p. 127. ²⁸ Wallace, 'Economy and commerce', p. 231. ²⁹ Dolley, *Hiberno-Norse coins in the British Museum*,

Northumbria (including York) is commoner than might be expected from the English finds record. The only regions significantly under-represented are those on the eastern seaboard of England, the Danelaw and East Anglia. This implies little contact with these areas. In the case of the latter, this is a point supported by Naismith's suggestion that coins from East Anglia were likely to remain within their region.³⁰

It can be more confidently asserted that the parcels of coins from regions in the Dublin hoards are likely to be broadly indicative of how coinage reached the town. It is probable that parcels of coins were brought back from England during the course of regular trade. Depending upon where traders went, the coins they brought back would have had a greater proportion of the English coinage local to that region. These parcels would have become gradually subsumed into the general circulating currency of Dublin with die-linked parcels gradually broken up. This was neither an instantaneous process nor ever absolutely complete, indicating that coinage was not changing hands especially rapidly but that circulation occurred consistently through time.

COINS IN USE

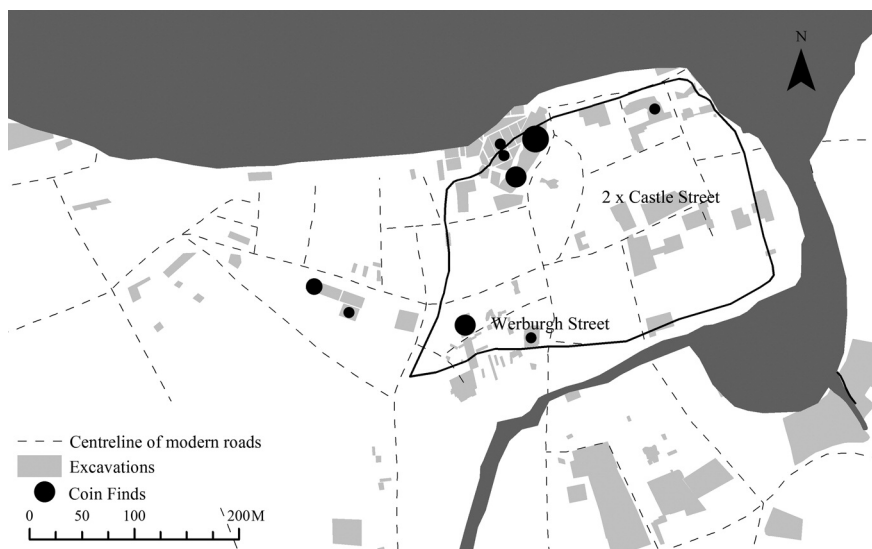
The hoards suggest that there was a well-mixed pool of currency in Dublin that was added to on a regular basis by the arrival of new parcels of coinage from England. They also allow for some comment on who may have been using the coins on their arrival into Dublin. The findspots of the hoards are marked on Figure 21.3 alongside the single finds of tenth-century coinage from excavations within Dublin. It is noticeable that most single finds come from the west of the embanked tenth-century town. The dominant site is Fishamble Street, which is in the north-west of the town, at the historic banks of the River Liffey. It has been suggested that this site, and the area immediately to the south of it, represent a 'commercial core' of the town in the early medieval period.³¹ The pre-eminence of this area within the town is suggested by the single-find record with half of the finds dating to c.973–95, near contemporary with the hoards, coming from Fishamble Street.³²

The three hoards are somewhat removed from this activity. This is particularly the case for the two hoards from Castle Street with the closest other coin found at Temple Bar West, to their north, but even this is some distance.³³ The hoard at Werburgh Street is closer to other finds with two single finds from the 990s, likely of the earliest Hiberno-Scandinavian type, from the same

pp 36–7; Blackburn, 'Part 4', 124. ³⁰ Naismith, 'English monetary economy', 215.

³¹ Woods, 'Coinage and economy', pp 52–60. ³² See the appendix in Woods, 'Monetary activity'.

³³ It should be noted, however, that it has been impossible to determine whether the excavations beneath the modern footprint of the castle, in the south-east of the embanked



21.3 Tenth-century coin finds from Dublin.

excavations. Furthermore, there are a number of finds from the Christchurch Place excavations, immediately to the west of the findspot of the Werburgh Street hoard. This southern area of the town comes to dominate the coin finds of the town during the eleventh century.³⁴

The immediate archaeological contexts of the hoards give some indication as to the depositors. At Werburgh Street, there is strong evidence for the working of metals on the site, in close proximity to where the hoards were found.³⁵ Indeed this southern area of the town may have been something of a metalworking quarter, with similar forms of evidence from nearby sites at Ross Road and Christchurch Place.³⁶ At Castle Street, the excavator found evidence for the working of amber in the early phases of the site.³⁷ The relationship between craft activities and coinage is probably a significant one. It suggests that coinage was not the exclusive preserve of international merchants, the types of people one might expect to find using and losing coinage at the riverine Fishamble Street. Coinage is also likely to have been used, in fairly substantial quantities, by craftspeople working elsewhere within the town. If analysis is extended into later periods then this relationship becomes even more clear with leatherworkers and woodworkers also likely to be using coins within Dublin.³⁸

town, have produced coinage. ³⁴ Woods, 'Coinage and economy', fig. 3.6. ³⁵ Hayden, 'Werburgh Street', pp 49–53. ³⁶ B. Ó Riordáin, 'Excavations in old Dublin' in J. Bradley (ed.), *Viking Dublin exposed: the Wood Quay saga* (Dublin, 1984), p. 140; C. Walsh, 'Dublin's southern town defences, tenth to fourteenth centuries' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2000* (Dublin, 2001), p. 101. ³⁷ Byrne, this volume. ³⁸ A.R. Woods, 'Economy and authority: a study of the coinage of

The fact that the hoards are found somewhat beyond the area where most evidence for ‘monetary activity’ is found within the town may well reflect the differing depositional circumstances of the coins. Single finds, the circles visible on Figure 21.3, are likely to represent the exchanging of coinage, its loss during usage. The hoards were very significant stores of wealth and represent coins deliberately placed in the ground, possibly for safe keeping. Acknowledging this difference, then, it is possible to argue that, while most people within the town would have been familiar with coinage, the hoards represent the wealth of those living in Castle Street or Werburgh Street. If they had wished to use their coinage, however, then they may have needed to travel either to the riverine part of the town, focused on Fishamble Street, or to what may have been a semi-formal market in and around Christchurch Place.

A SCANDINAVIAN INTERLOPER

One important and unexpected element within the Werburgh Street hoard is the presence of an Anglo-Scandinavian *Crux* type imitation, illustrated as Figure 21.4.³⁹ This coin was struck from what might seem an unlikely pair of dies – an obverse taken from England and used in Scandinavia with a locally made reverse.⁴⁰ Combinations such as this produced Scandinavian imitations of the same type, which are rarely found outside Scandinavia and the Baltic region.⁴¹ Determining whether this coin was struck before the die left England is difficult, but there are several aspects to the reverse that would suggest that it is of Scandinavian manufacture rather than English.⁴² The garbled moneyer’s name is the most obvious of these. It appears to read IEODDA with a strange half curve forming one element of the first ‘D’. Similarly, the mint name LVHD is a slightly garbled version of the usual LVND. The central portion of the coin, which reads CRVX, is also misaligned, with the ‘C’ that is usually found in the upper right quarter appearing in the upper left. While not absolutely conclusive, the reverse die would appear more likely to be Scandinavian. The coins struck in Scandinavia using this obverse die name York on their reverse; accordingly it may be that this represents the first use of this obverse die when its recent abstraction, probably from London, still carried some influence. The imported obverse die was a valuable commodity in Scandinavia and ensured that it was paired with assorted reverses, copying the names of different mints.

Close parallels can be drawn between the early Anglo-Scandinavian coinage and the Dublin series, since both relied heavily on the Anglo-Saxon model for

Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin and Ireland’ (PhD, University of Cambridge, 2013), ch. 7.

³⁹ The identification of this coin as Anglo-Scandinavian draws upon the work of a number of scholars including Kristin Bornholdt-Collins and Bill Lean. ⁴⁰ B. Malmer, *The Anglo-Scandinavian coinage, c.995–1020* (Stockholm, 1997), pp 91, 362–3, no. 6. The same obverse occurs with two different imitative reverses in the 1924 Igelösa churchyard hoard from Sweden. ⁴¹ Ibid., pp 301–55. ⁴² I am grateful to Rory Naismith for his opinions and advice



21.4 Anglo-Scandinavian *Crux* imitation from the Werburgh Street hoard.

inspiration and technical know-how at approximately the same point in time – so close, in fact, that it has never been entirely clear which was the first to be introduced. The find of this coin in the hoard from Werburgh Street is of some significance because it must have been struck very early in the Anglo-Scandinavian series and essentially stands at the head of Scandinavia's first 'national' coinages. Since this hoard also clearly pre-dates the introduction of Sitriuc's *Crux* type in Dublin, we may now conclude that the Anglo-Scandinavian coinage pre-dates the Irish equivalent by a short period. Determining the length of this period is difficult. It would have needed to be long enough for the coin to be struck in Scandinavia and ultimately find its way back to Dublin, but this may have been a matter of months rather than years. It is certainly notable at this point that the Werburgh Street hoard contained a parcel of coins from Northumbria and eastern England that were among the most recent additions to the hoard and one could speculate that this coin – an oddity in an economy almost entirely reliant on Anglo-Saxon England for its coinage – may be associated with that group.

CONCLUSIONS: NEW COINAGE, *c.*995

The impulse behind the commencement of minting, in areas where there had been little previous history for the production of coinage, has been the subject of discussion.⁴³ The importance of royal authority, Christian ideology, additional revenue and the payment of geld have all been suggested as being of importance. The truth behind the matter may involve a combination of these factors, but the hoards from Dublin do highlight the fact that Sitriuc's decision to have coins

about this coin. ⁴³ G. Williams, 'Kingship, Christianity and coinage: monetary and political perspectives on silver economy in the Viking Age' in Graham-Campbell and Williams (eds), *Silver economy*, pp 177–207.

struck in his name was not one solely based on economic considerations. Coinage had flowed into Dublin, and outwards into inland areas of Ireland, for decades before the town produced its own. The three Dublin hoards highlight the fact that regular parcels of coins were introduced into the currency pool of the town and became subsumed into it in reasonably short order. They also suggest that coinage was available and used by many people within the town, not just by those involved with long-distance trade. They do not suggest an economy that needed new coinage, suffered a dearth in supply or was struggling. In fact, they suggest quite the opposite, with regular mercantile contact with England and frequent exchange within Dublin. Thus, while Sitriuc's taking command of the coinage had a profound effect upon the means of exchange, its impact on the economy more widely can be questioned. The coins of the late tenth century, exemplified by the three hoards from Dublin, suggest that the economy of the town was booming and it is likely that, in the period after Sitriuc altered the coinage, it was very much business as usual.⁴⁴

Appendix 21A: Castle Street (1), Dublin (1993), c.990.

EDGAR (959–75) <i>Reform Small Cross</i> – Chester : Æthelhelm; London : Æthe[]; Oxford : Wulfred; Stamford : Riculf; Warwick : Grimr.	5
EDWARD THE MARTYR (975–8) <i>Small Cross</i> – Lincoln : Leofwig.	1
ÆTHELRED II (978–1016) <i>First Hand</i> – Barnstaple : Beorhtsige (2); Bath : Æthelric; Canterbury : Boga; Chester (left facing): Ælfstan (*), Leofman (2##); Grantham : Manna; Dover : Osferth; Exeter : Ælfstan, Bruna, Godwine (3**); Huntingdon : [Ælfri]c; Ipswich : Waltferth; Leicester : Styrkarr; Lewes : Herebeorht; Lincoln : Grind, Vnbeng (5##); London : Ælfgar, Beorhtsige, Eadmund, Godwine, Godric, Leofstan (3##), + 1 uncertain; Lympne : Le[ofri]c; Norwich : Manning; Oxford : Goding (2**); Shrewsbury : Æfic; Southampton : Isengel (2); Thetford : Eadgar, Osferth; Totnes : Dodda (*), Manna (2*); Wareham : Wulfric; Wilton : Sæwine; Winchester : Ælsige (3##), Beorhtnoth, Leofweald, Wulfstan; York : Frostulfr.	54
<i>Second Hand</i> – Chester : Ælfstan; Exeter : Ælfnoth; Lewes : Goldstan; London : Æthelwulf, Eadmund, Eahlstan, Godwine, Leofstan, Wulfmær; Lympne : Leofric (2##); Rochester : Siduwine; Shaftesbury : Æthelstan; Torksey : Thorketill; Winchester : Beorhtnoth, Beorhtæd.	16
<i>Benediction Hand</i> – Canterbury : Wulfwig; Chester : Æthelmod; Thetford : Eadgar.	3
Summary: 79 coins in total, 29 mints represented; 17 internal die-links (7 single die-links [*] and 10 die-duplicates [#]).	

⁴⁴ The three coin hoards described here were initially listed by Michael Kenny of the National Museum of Ireland and were later catalogued in detail by Bill Lean with additional input from Stewart Lyon. All subsequent studies are indebted to the firm foundation provided by these scholars. More recently, Kristin Bornholdt-Collins has worked on this material and has been very generous with her time and expertise. Rory Naismith has also read and commented on this essay, improving it enormously. While I am grateful to all, errors remain my responsibility.

Appendix 21B: Castle Street (2), Dublin (1993), c.995.

EDGAR (959–75) <i>Reform Small Cross</i> – Buckingham : Wulfmær?; Canterbury : Æthelstan; Northampton : Leofsige; Oxford : Wulfræd (3##).	6
EDWARD THE MARTYR (975–8) <i>Small Cross</i> – Bath : Æthelsige; Bedford : Ælfstan; London : Æthelstan; Lympne : Æthelstan; Northampton : Leofsige.	5
ÆTHELRED II (978–1016) <i>First Small Cross</i> – Lydford : Æthelræd; + one uncertain.	2
<i>FSC/First Hand mule</i> – Exeter : Æthelnoth.	1
<i>First Hand</i> – Barnstaple : Beorhtsige (2); Bedford : Oswig; Grantham : Manna; Canterbury : Boga, Eadweald, Leofric; Chester : Ælfstan; Chichester : Ælfwig; Derby : Gunnarr, Asulfr, Wulfstan; Exeter : Godwine, Luda; Hertford : Wulfmær, Wulfric; Ilchester : God; Ipswich : Waltferth; Leicester : Dun, Asfrithr (2##); Lewes : Herebeorht, Leofstan; Lincoln : Grind, Theodgild, Thorketill; London : Ælfgar (2), Ælfstan, Æthelræd (2), Cynesige, Eadhelm (3), Godwine, Leofric (2), Asulfr (3##); Northampton : Leofsige; Nottingham : Sumarlithr; Rochester : Eadhelm; Shaftesbury : Æthelstan (3), Leofhelm; Shrewsbury : Æfic; Southampton : Æthelweard; Stamford : Grimr, Leofdæg; Thetford : Eadgar (2); Totnes : Dodda, Manna; Winchester : Ælsige (4##), Beorhtsige (5#####), Beorhtnoth (2), Eadsige, Freothumund, Ingalric, Regenulf, Toki; York : Farmann, Oban, Styr.	75
<i>Second Hand</i> – Derby : Gunnarr; Exeter : Ælfnoth; Lewes : Leofstan; London : Ælfnoth, Ealhstan, Eadwine, Leofstan, Wulfstan; Norwich : Svertingr; Shrewsbury : Dilion; Winchester : Beorhtnoth, Beorhtsige; + one uncertain mint: Æthe-.	13
<i>Benediction Hand</i> – Bath : Æthelric; Chester : Ælfstan (7#####), Eadric (2**), Æthelmod (2##), Wulflaf (*); Chichester : Eadnoth; Gloucester : Leofsige; Ipswich : Leofsige; Northampton : Leofsige; Norwich : Svertingr; Wilton : Boga.	19
<i>Second Hand/Crux mule</i> – London : Eadwine (*); Rochester : Goldwine (*), Siduwine (*/*).	3
<i>Benediction Hand/Crux mule</i> – Norwich : Folcard.	1
<i>Crux</i> – Barnstaple : Beorhtsige; Bedford : Ælfstan (2), uncertain; Cambridge : Asketill; Canterbury : Leofric, Leofstan, Leofing/Lifing; Chester : Ælfstan (4####*), Boga, Eadric, Æthelmod (2##), Riculf, Sigewine (3##*); Colchester : Sweting; Exeter : Beorhtsige, Beorhtstan (2**), Eadric, God/Goda; Hastings? : Eadstan (2##); Hereford : Leofgar (2##); Ilchester : God/Goda; Ipswich : Leofsige, Lytelman; Lewes : Ælfgar (2), Leofwine; Lincoln : Kolgrimr (2), Steinbitr (2), Ubeinn; London : Ælfnoth (2), Ælfwine (3##), Æthelræd, Beorhtlaf (2), Eadwine (2**), Ealhstan, Eadsige, Godric (3***), Godwine, Leofstan (2), Asketill (3**), Sweting; Malmesbury : Ealdræd, Leofwine; Norwich : Svertingr; Rochester : Leofric, Siduwine (3##*); Shaftesbury : Æthelwig; Shrewsbury : Martin; Stamford? : Ælfweard; Southwark : Æthelweard; Thetford : Beorhtric, Eadweald, Sperling (2##); Totnes : Dodda; Wallingford : Oda; Wareham : Beorhtsige (2##), Wulfric; Watchet : Sigeric; Wilton : Boga (2**); Winchester : Ælsige (4**), Æthelgar, Æthelstan (2*), Beorhtnoth (3), Beorhtmær (4**), Beorhtræd (*), Beorhtsige (3*), Eadnoth (2*), Eadsige (3**), Heahwulf, Leofweald (3**), Wynstan; York : Eadric, Authulfr, Sunnulf.	117
Summary: 242 coins in total, 43 mints represented (+ 2 uncertain); 74 internal die-links (33 single die-links [*] and 41 die-duplicates[#]).	

Appendix 21C: Werburgh Street, Dublin (1994), c.995.

ÆTHELRED II (978–1016)	
<i>First Small Cross</i> , right facing – Exeter : Æthelnoth.	1
<i>First Small Cross</i> – Stamford : Boga.	1
<i>First Hand</i> – Canterbury : Boga (2), Leofing, Leofstan; Chester (left facing): Wulfaf; Ipswich : Branting, Waltferth; Lincoln : Svertingr; London : Ælfgar (3), Æthelræd (2), Cynesige (2), Goda, Leofstan, Asfrithr, Asulfr/Oswulf (3); Maldon : Eadweald; Shaftesbury : Æthelstan; Shrewsbury : Æfic; Thetford : Eadgar; Totnes : Dodda; Winchester : Ælfsige, Beorhtnoth, Eadsige, Freothumund (2), Ingalric (2), Toki; York : Asulfr, Kolgrimr, Herewulf, Oda, Thorsteinn.	39
<i>Second Hand/First Hand mule</i> – London : Asulfr.	1
<i>Second Hand</i> – Canterbury : Eadweald; Exeter : Ælfstan; Gloucester : Leofsige; London : Beornwulf, Ealhstan, Goda, Leofwine, Asketill, Sibwine; Northampton : Leofing; Stamford : Godwine, + one uncertain; Winchester : Æthelweard, Æthelstan, Beorhtnoth.	15
<i>Second Hand/Benediction Hand mule?</i> – Chester : Æthelmod.	1
<i>Benediction Hand</i> – London : Eadwine, Asketill; Shrewsbury? : Brungar; Shrewsbury : Winsige; Thetford : Sperling; Winchester : Beorhtæd, Beorhtsige.	7
<i>Second Hand/Crux mule</i> – Colchester : Sweting.	1
<i>Benediction Hand/Crux mule</i> – York : Sunnulf (2##).	2
<i>Crux</i> – Barnstaple : Ælfsige; Canterbury : Eadweald, Leofric; Colchester : Sweting; Exeter : Ælfnoth (2), Ælfstan, Beorhtstan (2**), Goda; Ipswich : Lytelman (3*##); Lincoln : Kolgrimr (2), Gife, Leofman, Steinbitr (2##), Ubeinn; London : Ælfnoth, Ælfwine (*), Æthelræd, Beorhtlaf, Ealhstan, Eadsige, Godric, Godwine(*), Leofing, Asketill, Wulfgar; Oxford : Goding; Shaftesbury : Goda; Southwark : Æthelweard; Thetford : Sperling; Wareham : Wulfric; Watchet : Sigeric; Winchester : Ælfsige, Eadsige (2##), Leofweald (2); York : Arnthorr, Eadric (2), Grimir, Hundulf (*), Oio (3***), Asulfr, Authulf, Authgrimr (2**), Sunnulf, Thorsteinn (*).	56
<i>Crux</i> , Scandinavian imitation – ‘London’: ‘Ieodda’.	
Summary: 125 coins in total, 22 mints represented + 1 Scandinavian imitation; 20 internal die-links (12 single die-links [*] and 8 die-duplicates [#]).	

Copies or creations? Some shared elements in Hiberno-Norse and Scandinavian artwork

UAININN O'MEADHRA

Most of the major pieces of decorated metalwork of the late tenth to twelfth centuries in Ireland share motif traits with Scandinavian art. Excavation findings suggest that these Scandinavian characteristics were introduced into Ireland through Hiberno-Norse towns on the east coast, but might this decoration have originated instead in Ireland? What importance does the bias of survival play and how do we ascertain priority? Is it possible to distinguish what is the copy and what is the creation? Is it merely a question of relative dates and style analysis? Such complexities can be highlighted by isolating relevant traits in the artwork of this internationally vibrant period, when diverse stylistic impulses were easily spread by the many travellers in circulation around the greater northern world.

INTERNATIONALISM, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY THROUGH ART

This essay¹ discusses some diagnostic traits in high-quality artwork² of late Viking Ireland, indicative of stylistic communication and cross-fertilization between Ireland and northern Europe in the period c.950–1150, prior to the Anglo-Norman takeover of the Scandinavian towns.

¹ I should like to thank Breandán Ó Riordáin and Patrick Wallace, directors of the 1962–81 NMI Dublin city excavations, for generous access to their finds and inspiring discussion. For debate and practical assistance I wish to thank Ragnall Ó Floinn and Margaret Lannin (NMI), Ruth Johnson (Dublin City Council) and Adrienne Corless (Dublin Excavations Publication Project, NMI). For assistance and access to other finds discussed here, see the acknowledgments in U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art: motif-pieces from Ireland*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1979–87), hereafter referred as *Motif-pieces*, i and ii. ² The simple, geometric decoration on everyday household items differs considerably in technique and motif from the intricate animal and vegetal patterns produced by skilled artisans on display items and personal possessions. See the site motif-charts in O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 22–75, 173, sections 6.5.5–6. See also J. Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts: a select catalogue* (London, 1980). For Dublin, see B. Ó Riordáin, *Viking and medieval Dublin: National Museum excavations, 1962–73. Catalogue of exhibition* (Dublin, 1973); R. Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 2004), p. 87. See also S.H. Fuglesang, 'Woodcarvers – professionals and amateurs – in eleventh century Trondheim' in D.M. Wilson and M.I. Caygill (eds), *Economic aspects of the Viking Age* (London, 1981), pp 21–6; U. O'Meadhra, 'Skisser i

Many of the decorated finds excavated from late Viking Dublin, Wexford and Waterford have stylistic parallels in a historically undocumented area of contact – namely Sweden, Gotland and the Baltic lands. While mindful of the disproportionally high survival rate of finds in all these areas, might this be evidence of direct contacts, or of independent, parallel developments in mainstream fashion trends in peripheral areas exposed to common impulses? Throughout the whole of the Viking period, the bearers of different cultural and social identities circulated around the extended northern world. While this created opportunities for sharing cultural impulses, it also encouraged manifestations of local identity.³

In pre-modern society the major way of expressing cultural identity and status was through one's attire and accoutrements, as well as through fashionably decorated possessions in the case of high-status individuals. The resulting progression of fashion trends in the decorative arts provides us with a useful sorting tool, while allowing for retardations and deviations. Since ornament holds a large variety of discrete traits, style analysis is one of the more sensitive detectors of cultural ethnicity available to the archaeologist. Can we ascertain whether artists kept to ethnic codes of pattern and form, style and technique?⁴

COPIES AND CREATIONS

Distinguishing between copies and innovations requires the subjective assessment of the analyst, based on his/her choice of relevant traits and groups of material. Nevertheless, it is theoretically possible to differentiate between various types of copy – the conservative copy, which follows the model religiously, and the conservative creation, which follows rules of fashion; versus the innovative copy, which makes adjustments while copying and the innovative creation, which extends the established style rules. The first two lie within the style norm and the latter two lie outside it.

urnes-/ runstenstil på horn och ben från Sigtuna', *Situne Dei* (2010), 85–96, figs 1–5; L. Kitzler-Åhfeldt, 'Några träfynd i Sigtuna från runstenstid', *Situne Dei* (2011), 49–60, figs 1–20. 3 There is a growing literature on the topic of identity and ethnicity in this period. For a recent comprehensive summary with references, see L. Abrams, 'Diaspora and identity in the Viking Age', *Early Medieval Europe*, 20 (2012), 17–38. See also J. Graham-Campbell, 'National and regional identities: the "glittering prizes"' in M. Redknap et al. (eds), *Pattern and purpose in Insular art* (Oxford, 2001), pp 27–38; R.A. Hall, 'Anglo-Scandinavian attitudes: archaeological ambiguities in late ninth- to mid-eleventh-century York' in D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards (eds), *Cultures in contact: Scandinavian settlement in England in the ninth and tenth centuries* (Turnhout, 2000), pp 318–20. For a modern viewpoint, see P.F. Wallace, 'Irish archaeology and the recognition of ethnic difference in Viking Dublin' in C. Fawcett et al. (eds), *Evaluating multiple narratives* (New York, 2008), pp 166–83. 4 See, for example, Kaupang, below. This is a basic problem in all style attribution (S.H. Fuglesang, 'Woodcarving from Oslo and Trondheim and some reflections on period styles' in *Festschrift til Thorleif Sjøvold på 70-årsdagen* (Oslo, 1984), pp 93–108). The possibility of contemporary ethnic

The importance of unfinished artwork cannot be overemphasized in diagnosing native styles and native workmanship. A sufficiently large find of unfinished works can uniquely pinpoint the date and location of the use of art-motifs, techniques and artistic skills. A single item, however, even if unfinished, can be moved from its place of manufacture. Approximately twenty-four of the 150 catalogued decorated wooden finds from Viking Dublin⁵ bear secondary sketches or unfinished decoration and were thus clearly executed in Dublin. Some of these decorated wooden objects will be discussed below.

Motif-pieces form the major category of unfinished art material in late Viking-Age Ireland. These scraps of bone, stone or wood, displaying discrete panels of ornamental motifs – mainly geometric, foliate and animal interlace – are best understood as apprentices' learning attempts and artisans' trials, worksheets and samplers. They indicate that teaching and designing were activities in their own right. Motif-pieces are often found in association with evidence for fine craftsmanship, especially metalworking. In some rare cases they show patterns that relate to art-objects on the same sites. It seems that the motif-pieces we have found are merely the cast-offs in site waste and that we rarely find the good finished examples (pl. 20).

Motif-pieces are an Insular, mainly Irish, phenomenon. They first appear in the late Celtic period and disappear at the introduction of Anglo-Norman workshop practices. Over three hundred are known from Ireland, of which over two hundred come from Viking Dublin. They are not known to occur in migration-period contexts, nor in early Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, continental or early Scandinavian regions. Their occurrence in mid- to late Viking urban contexts in York and London seems to be associated with those towns' contact with the Irish sphere, as parallel developments. Their occurrence in Scandinavian contexts only after c. 1000 suggests that they arrived there under influence from the west, via either London or Dublin.⁶

BACKGROUND

Most of the Insular objects in Scandinavia have been recovered from Viking graves in Norway, brought home as Viking loot, barter and/or gifts to be adapted into dress or household equipment and were eventually buried with their Viking

labelling in Viking Dublin by its inhabitants is touched on in U. O'Meadhra, 'A medieval Dubliner's talismanic portrait? An incised profile cut-out head from Christ Church Place, Dublin', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 21 (1991), 39–54. 5 J.T. Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood: a study of its ornament and style* (Dublin, 1988). 6 Motif-pieces have been analysed in discussion of individual pieces in the major exhibition catalogues of the 1970s and 1980s. See, for example, Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, pp 124, 136–7; M. Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland: Irish art, 3000BC–1500AD* (Dublin, 1983), pp 158–61, nos 74a–c; E. Roesdahl and D.M. Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader: the Scandinavians and Europe 800–1200* (Rizzoli, 1992), no. 397. See also S.H. Fuglesang *Aspects of the Ringerike style: a*

owners. The Irish material (where close origin can be determined) occurs mainly in the western regions around Stavanger and Bergen up to Sogn. There is also a growing number of individual settlement finds (perhaps traded or exchanged) from major central places in east-central Sweden and southern Scandinavia, such as Birka, Helgö, Kaupang, Lund–Uppåkra, Tissø, Hedeby (Haithabu) etc.⁷

Recent finds at Kaupang, Norway, suggest that some Insular (perhaps Irish) objects were mechanically copied after having arrived in Scandinavia.⁸ Insular influence on Scandinavian art at this early stage in the Viking period is still debated.⁹ While the concept of the penannular brooch as an artefact may be an Insular borrowing, this does not refer to its decoration.¹⁰

phase of eleventh century Scandinavian art (Odense, 1980), no. 102; R. Johnson, 'On the dating of some early-medieval Irish crosiers', *Medieval Archaeology*, 40 (1998), 140–51 and her forthcoming catalogue of motif-pieces in the NMI medieval Dublin excavations series. For important unpublished academic theses that analyse motif-pieces, see E. Farnes, 'Some aspects of the relationship between late eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish art and the Scandinavian Urnes style' (MA, UCD, 1975), which is a very comprehensive work of doctoral standard distributed in a stencilled copy throughout Scandinavia during the 1970s and 1980s; R.G. Peterson, 'Viking art in the British Isles: an analysis of the nature of artistic influence' (PhD, University of Michigan, 1987); R. Johnson, 'Viking-Age bone motif-pieces from Fishamble Street, Dublin' (BA, University College London, 1993); R. Johnson, 'An archaeological and art historical investigation of the tenth century hiatus in Irish art: with reference to excavations at Ballinderry crannog no. 1, Co. Westmeath, 1932 and Dublin City, 1962–81', 3 vols (PhD, TCD, 1997); J.L. McGraw, 'Kunstnere og kunsthåndverk Dublin 900–1200 e.Kr.: Motivstykker som uttrykk for håndverkspraksis og kommunikasjon' (MA, University of Oslo, 2011). For my own catalogue work and discussions, see O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i and ii; U. O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements in the motif-pieces from Ireland' in M. Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art, AD500–1200* (Dublin, 1987), pp 159–65; U. O'Meadhra, 'Viking-Age sketches and motif-pieces from the northern earldoms' in C. Batey et al. (eds), *The Viking Age in Caithness, Orkney and the north Atlantic* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp 423–40; U. O'Meadhra, 'Remarks on a sword pattern from late Viking Dublin and designer sketches in general' in G. Arwidsson et al. (eds), *Sources and resources: studies in honour of Birgit Arrhenius* (Rixensart, 1993), pp 527–35; U. O'Meadhra, 'Bone motif-piece' in M. O'Brien, 'Excavations at Barrack Street – French's Quay, Cork', *JCHAS*, 98 (1993), 42; U. O'Meadhra, 'Motif-pieces and other decorated bone and antlerwork' in M.F. Hurley et al., *Late Viking-Age and medieval Waterford: excavations, 1986–1992* (Waterford, 1997), pp 51–3; U. O'Meadhra, 'Motivstycken i Sverige – varför så få?' in A. Åkerlund et al. (eds), *Till Gunborg – Arkeologiska Samtal* (Stockholm, 1997), pp 95–104. 7 E. Wamers, 'Insular finds in Viking-Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 49; J.P. Lamm and U. O'Meadhra, 'The enigmatic Irish stud from Helgö' in B. Arrhenius and U. O'Meadhra (eds), *Excavations at Helgö XVIII. Conclusions and new aspects* (Stockholm, 2011), p. 149. 8 U. Pedersen, 'I smeltedigelen: finsmedene i vikingtidshøen Kaupang' (PhD, University of Oslo, 2010); U. Pedersen and L. Pilo, 'The settlement: artefacts and site periods' in D. Skre (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal* (Aarhus, 2007), pp 179–90; E. Wamers, 'Continental and Insular metalwork' in D. Skre (ed.), *Finds of precious metals, stones, glass and pottery*, forthcoming. 9 For a balanced survey, see I. Jansson, *Ovala spännbucklor* (Uppsala, 1985), pp 187–93, 229–30; N. Åberg, *Keltiska och orientaliska stilinfluerer i vikingatidens nordiska kunst* (Stockholm, 1941); S.H. Fuglesang, 'Vikingtidens kunst' in K. Berg (ed.), *Norges kunsthistorie 1* (Oslo, 1981), pp 36–138; D.M. Wilson *Vikingatidens konst* (Lund, 1995), p. 34. 10 J. Graham-Campbell, 'Western influences on penannular brooches and ring-headed pins'

The only certain Irish finds of subsequent date in Scandinavia, to the best of my knowledge, are a few plain-ringed polyhedral-headed pins in the Danish area from Ribe, Hedeby, Aarhus, Odense and two from Sigtuna, the latter three of almost identical type. At Sigtuna a stick-pin of Dublin type was also found and the ringed pins were either heirlooms or redeposited since they came from a twelfth- to thirteenth-century layer. These few finds could well have been the result of personal visits.¹¹ Queried Irish influence in the decoration of some Gotlandic artefacts will be discussed below.

The Scandinavian artefacts brought to Ireland during the first phase of Norse Viking activity¹² in the late eighth to ninth centuries, even though some found their way into Irish hands, had limited influence on Irish art.¹³ In later centuries, items originating directly from Scandinavia are relatively rare in Ireland outside the Hiberno-Norse towns.¹⁴ A number of leather artefacts from the lower levels in Dublin have decoration similar to sheaths and scabbards from Scandinavian Viking contexts and could be imports.¹⁵ Most of the decorated material belongs to the Insular development of these impulses. This is in keeping with the historical and archaeological evidence that, while Norwegian Vikings were the first to establish sites in Ireland, the second wave came from western England. These new or returning settlers did not bring objects from Scandinavia unless as heirlooms or recent contact with their homelands. The 'Viking' presence in art (asymmetrical and tightly packed geometrical patterns, ring-chain, vertebrae, step fret, pointed loops, dotted backgrounds etc.) as seen in the tenth-century finds from the midlands and Dublin is in fact evidence of Insular Viking taste in design that was prominent around the Irish Sea as a development of a Viking presence.¹⁶ The Jellinge-style animal and interlace patterns emanating from north-east England resulted from political activities of the Viking leaders

in G. Arwidsson (ed.), *Birka II: 1. Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde* (Stockholm, 1984), pp 31–8. ¹¹ T. Fanning, *Viking-Age ringed pins from Dublin* (Dublin, 1994), pp 34–6; M. Roslund, 'Västanfläkt eller en stadig vind? Kontinentala och insulära inslag i Sigtunas tidiga medeltid', *Situne Dei* (2010), pp 34, 48–9; fig. 8. ¹² For settlement finds, see R. O'Floinn, 'The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 131–65. For objects that remained in Scandinavian ownership, see S. Harrison and R. Ó Floinn, *Viking graves and grave-goods from Ireland*, forthcoming. ¹³ See two comprehensive surveys with references: J. Graham-Campbell, 'From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea: Viking art reviewed' in Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art*, pp 150–1; R. Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art in the early medieval period' in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 86–98. ¹⁴ The two oft-cited tenth-century brooches from the lowest levels of Dublin (one an unfinished casting, the other adapted to a long pin) are considered as coming indirectly from Scandinavia to Dublin and relate to similar finds from Chester and eastern England (Graham-Campbell, 'From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea', p. 149). ¹⁵ E. Cameron, *Scabbards and sheaths from Viking and medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2007), p. 61. ¹⁶ R. Johnson, 'The development of Irish brooch forms and pins in the Viking Age, c.850–1170', *Peritia*, 15 (2001), 321–62, esp. 329, 336. See also U. O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, p. 20, section 3.1.2 and p. 28; Graham-Campbell, 'From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea', p. 151 with references; Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', pp 89–90 with references.

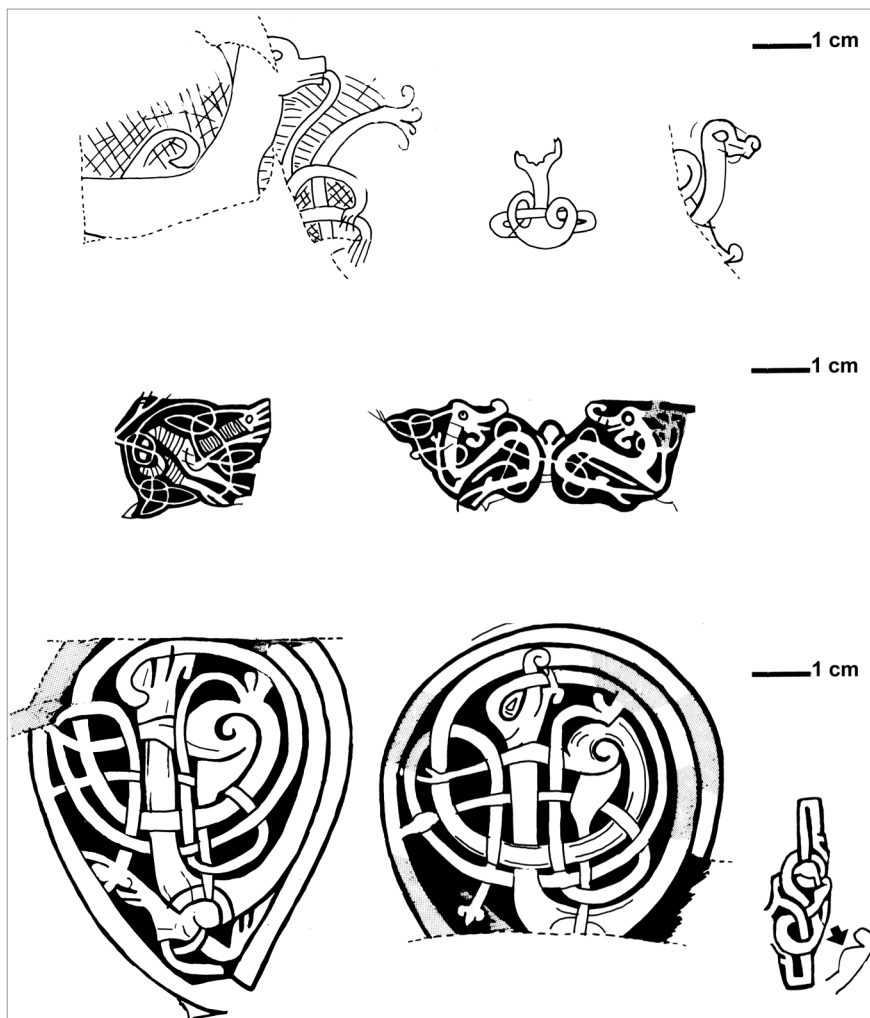
between York and Dublin, as reflected in borrowings in the artwork of both areas.¹⁷ There is still no evidence in Ireland of the Scandinavian iconography prevalent in northern England and on Man, or of the western Scandinavian Jellinge-/Mammen-type animal patterns known from the Manx Braddan crosses and the Skail brooches (see below).¹⁸

Scandinavian artefacts are even scarcer in the eleventh to twelfth centuries. A single early twelfth-century Scandinavian Urnes-style openwork bird brooch is recorded from Dublin city and this is an old, stray find.¹⁹ Ireland does not show the range of objects of Scandinavian character that turn up in the Danelaw, which is understandable since these reflect a social group with military ties to Denmark.²⁰ When we consider the whole range of other small finds from excavations of late Viking towns in Scandinavia and the west, it appears that the sites in Ireland accommodated some Scandinavian inhabitants, but that there was a gradual acclimatization to Insular Viking ways.²¹

COPIES OR CREATIONS IN NON-URBAN HIBERNO-NORSE CONTEXTS

Three examples of copies of Scandinavian ideas stand out among the non-urban material, all of which are found on motif-pieces (fig. 22.1). A slate fragment with a late tenth- to eleventh-century context from the monastery site of Nendrum, Co. Down,²² has unevenly executed sketches of the Scandinavian beast in

17 D.M. Wilson, 'Jellinge-style sculpture in northern England' in M.C. Stang and K. Bliksrud-Aavitsland (eds), *Ornament and order: essays on Viking and northern medieval art for Signe Horn Fuglesang* (Trondheim, 2008); Hall, 'Anglo-Scandinavian attitudes', p. 320; Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 45; O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 160; Johnson, 'On the dating of some early medieval Irish crosiers'. 18 First observed by Graham-Campbell in the 1980s and still valid. 19 Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin*, p. 44. For these brooches, see L.G. Bertelsen, 'Urnesfibler i Danmark' in *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (Copenhagen, 1992), pp 345–70. One centre of manufacture is known from Lund in southern Sweden, stratigraphically dated to the early twelfth century, though no moulds for bird brooches were found there (Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, no. 440; Roesdahl and Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader*, no. 589, pp 199, 383 with references). 20 See the Portable Antiquities Scheme at www.finds.org.uk; E. Roesdahl et al. (eds), *The Vikings in England and their Danish homeland* (London, 1981); Graham-Campbell, 'From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea', pp 149–50. Very few have survived in Denmark (A. Pedersen, 'Anglo-Danish contact across the North Sea in the eleventh century. A survey of the Danish archaeological evidence' in J. Adams (ed.), *Scandinavia and Europe, 800–1350: contact, conflict and coexistence* (Turnhout, 2004), pp 43–67; A. Pedersen and E. Roesdahl, 'A Ringerike-style animal's head from Aggersborg, Denmark' in Stang and Bliksrud-Aavitsland (eds), *Ornament and order*, pp 31–7). 21 Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', pp 89–90 with references; P.F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Ireland's Viking-Age towns' in *NHI*, i, pp 814–16, 833; H.B. Clarke (ed.), *Medieval Dublin: the making of a metropolis* (Dublin, 2012); S. Brink and N. Price (eds), *The northern world* (London, 2010). For older syntheses, see B. Almgren et al., *The Vikings* (Gothenburg, 1967); P.G. Foote and D.M. Wilson, *The Viking achievement* (London, 1970); various contributions in Roesdahl and Wilson, *From Viking to crusader*. 22 O'Meadhra,



22.1 Scandinavian influence on late tenth- and eleventh-century motif-pieces from Nendrum (upper row), Shandon/Dungarvan (middle row) and Killaloe (lower row). Scale marker = 1 cm.

combat, curled bird and interlace where the upper strand crosses two strands. These are best interpreted as fairly creative copies of Insular Viking decoration as known from northern England, the Isle of Man and Dublin (related motifs occur on a stone motif-piece from tenth-century levels at Dublin).²³ The squared

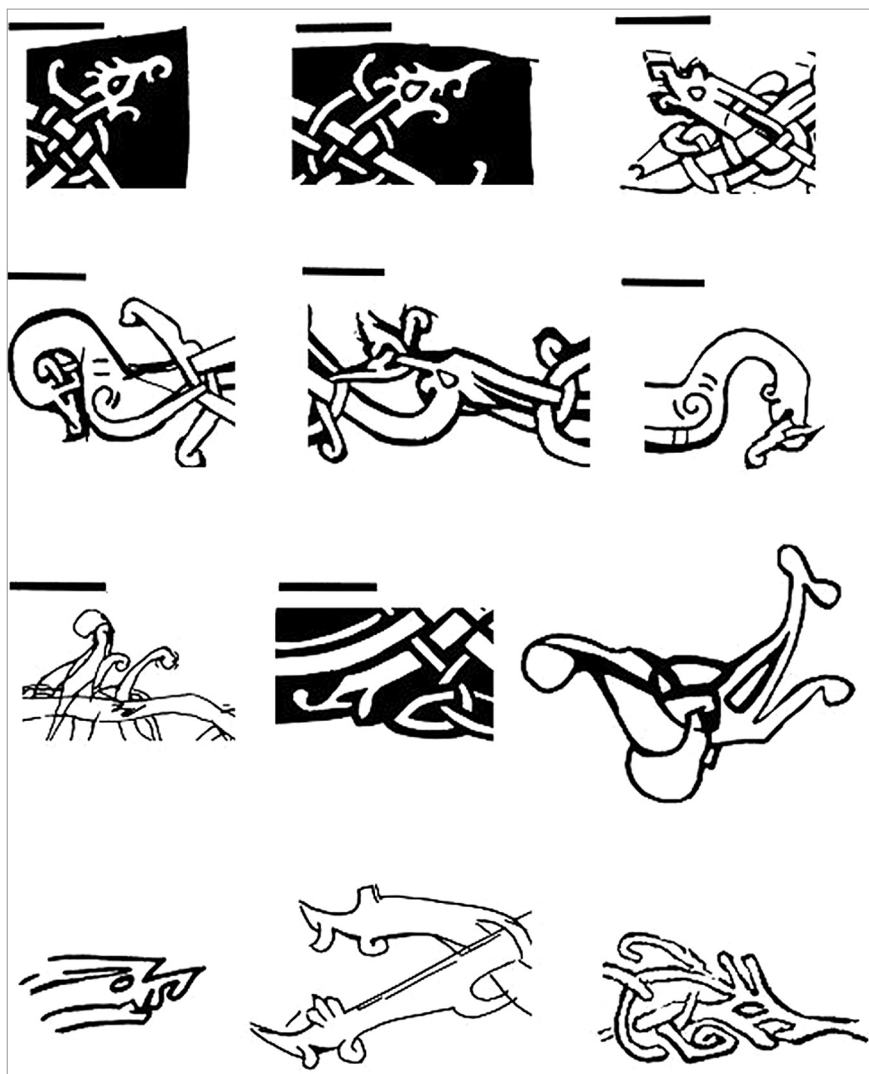
Motif-pieces, i, p. 99, no. 135, pls 47–8. This slate piece was found separate from the eighth- to ninth-century ‘school’ of motif-pieces, but in a midden considered to be associated with the burning of the monastery in 974. It might have belonged originally with the stick-pin and strap-end, both of Dublin types, also found on the site (O’Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 72–3,

long-bone from Shandon, near Dungarvan, Co. Waterford,²⁴ which might be associated with a late Hiberno-Norse settlement in the Shandon area,²⁵ has one extremely poorly executed version of its hybrid motifs that is the work of an unskilled copier. Finally, the well-known stone motif-piece from Killaloe, Co. Clare, exhibits a classic example of creative copying.²⁶ The main pattern on each face is almost identical to a free adaptation of a characteristic eleventh-century 'Anglo-Scandinavian Urnes' motif found on openwork bronze fittings from south-east England, with some also occurring in Denmark.²⁷ The rendering here, along with the other motifs on the piece, indicate the Irish nature of the cutter.²⁸ This link with the Danelaw is unique in Ireland and indicates a different form of Hiberno-Norse activity from that on the east coast. It is possibly associated with the urban environment of Limerick or the monastery at Killaloe, which was itself known to favour Norse connections.²⁹ With the exception of the east and south-east coasts in Ireland, Scandinavian influence seems less direct at this later period, suggesting that adaptations of non-native designs took place at second or third hand in the Irish monastic workshops and the Hiberno-Norse towns of Cork and Limerick.³⁰

COPIES OR CREATIONS IN HIBERNO-NORSE TOWNS

Some unfinished decorated objects of wood, bone and leather from late Viking Dublin, Wexford and Waterford show minor elements of mainstream Scandinavian art not otherwise seen in the contemporary Irish repertoire.³¹ Many others display idiosyncrasies that are evidence either of stylistic misunderstandings or

fig. 50a, d). The oft-cited possible runes at Nendrum are now definitively dismissed in M.P. Barnes et al., *The runic inscriptions of Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 1997), p. 2. 23 O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 63, patterns 63B3–B4; p. 67, pls 25–6, figs 347–54. 24 Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 90; O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 64, patterns 64A2–3, 64B1–2; pp 68–9, figs 359, 364–6, pls 25–6. 25 S. Elder et al., 'Medieval moated site at Shandon townland, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford (Ireland) – archaeological report', *Eachtra Journal*, 14 (2012), 1–15. 26 O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 114, patterns 114A8, 114B11; pp 24, 85–7, pl. 39, figs 398–9; Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, no. 478. 27 Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, p. 43, nos 147–8. For Denmark, see, for example, the mount from Viborg in Copenhagen, National Museum of Denmark, reg. no. C4254. 28 O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 60–1; O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 162; Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, no. 478. 29 The piece is a single find, possibly associated with the Hiberno-Scandinavian/Irish milieu of the major ecclesiastical centre of Killaloe, with its bilingual runic inscription and proximity to both Limerick and Kincora (O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 60–1; Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 90). 30 Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 90. 31 The most striking Dublin examples are the small wooden cut-out snake-head from High Street (NMI, E71:6180) and a bone motif-piece from Christchurch Place (NMI, E122:14044), both with different types of classic runestone head details (O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', pp 160–4, pl. 1c–e, figs 4–5; O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, p. 52, fig. 35; confirmed in Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp



22.2 Scandinavian head-types on eleventh- and twelfth-century motif-pieces from Dublin (all four rows) and Waterford (lower row, far right). Various scales; scale marker = 1 cm.

of innovative creativity. The important question thus is whether it is only in their decoration that these show Scandinavian traits or also in the type of artefact? The apparent similarities between Swedish runestone art³² and some of the motif-pieces from late Viking Dublin and Waterford (fig. 22.2) point towards the Baltic

27–8, 68, no. DW50). ³² *Sveriges runinskrifter*, 15 vols (Stockholm, 1900–81) with ongoing digital supplements published online by the Swedish National Heritage Board at www.raa.se

as being an unexpected area of contact with Ireland.³³ The bone pin from Wexford with Ringerike foliage decoration could be a Scandinavian import, or from Dublin, if not made by a Scandinavian in Wexford.³⁴ Another area of contact shows up in some Dublin finds of unfinished decorated wood and motif-pieces that show close parallels with metalwork from the Winchester area.³⁵ The question is: who influenced whom and how?

It is still unresolved whether the Dublin motif-pieces were the work of Irish artisans working creatively for Hiberno-Norse or Scandinavian patrons who also followed York and London fashions, or whether they are evidence of Scandinavian artists adopting an Irish working method for Hiberno-Norse or Scandinavian patrons. Either way, they are the source of entry of Scandinavian art influence into Irish art.³⁶

TWO CASE STUDIES OF COPIES OR IMPORTS IN DUBLIN

I should like now to reassess two finds that were previously identified as evidence in Dublin of an import in Scandinavian Oseberg style³⁷ and of a product of the Insular 'west Viking' Manx/Skaill style (Lang's DW10 and DW12 respectively).³⁸

In his definitive catalogue of the decorated wood from the Dublin excavations, Lang considered DW10 (fig. 22.3) – a metre-long section of a curved plank that is bevelled on both long sides – to be from a decorated 'ship's prow'.³⁹ Measuring

(/Digitala Sveriges runinskrifter), where a scanned version of the printed volumes is now also available. The runestone dates are less fixed than desired, even though much has been done to tighten up a relative chronology. Their dating is still based on estimates of association with historical events or of similarity in decoration to the dated Irish shrines. Compare the differing results in A.-S. Gräslund, 'Rune stones – on ornamentation and chronology' in B. Ambrosiani and H. Clarke (eds), *The Twelfth Viking Congress: developments around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age* (Stockholm, 1994), pp 117–31; A.-S. Gräslund, 'Dating the Swedish Viking-Age rune stones on stylistic grounds' in M. Stoklund et al. (eds), *Runes and their secrets: studies in runology* (Copenhagen, 2006), pp 126–39. For a different perspective, see S.H. Fuglesang, 'Swedish runestones of the eleventh century: ornament and dating' in K. Düwel and S. Nowak (eds), *Runeninschriften als Quellen interdisziplinärer Forschung* (Göttingen, 1998), pp 197–218. See also S.B.F. Jansson, *Runes in Sweden*, trans. P. Foote (Stockholm, 1987).

33 NMI sources for Figure 22.2: Dublin, upper row E71:708; second row E81:2207; third row E122:323, E71:6180; lower row E148:1127, E122:14044; Waterford E527:1614:4. See further below.

34 Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 95; E. Bourke, 'Two early eleventh-century Viking houses from Bride Street, Wexford, and the layout of properties on the site', *Journal of the Wexford Historical Society*, 12 (1988–9), 58, fig. 4.

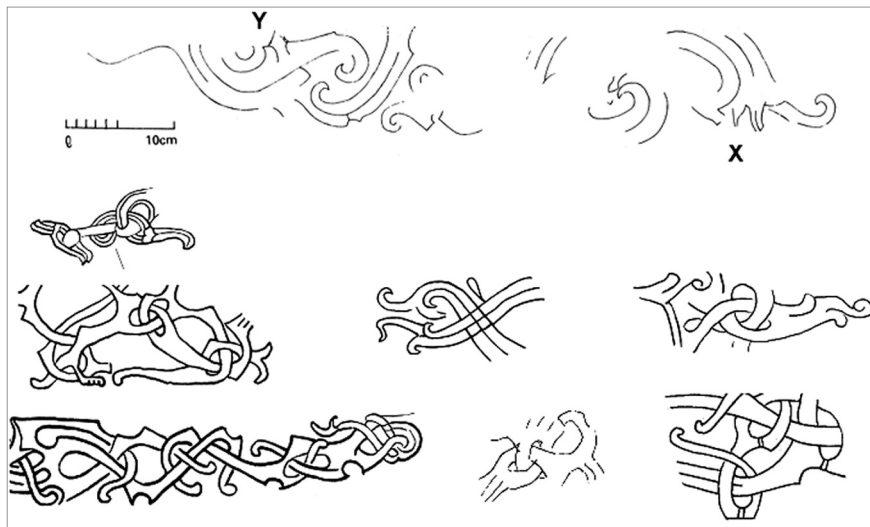
35 J. Lang, 'Eleventh-century style in decorated wood from Dublin' in Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art*, pp 176–7, fig. 5; Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 22; O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 163, fig. 4.

36 Farnes, 'Scandinavian Urnes style'; Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 69; O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 98–101; Abrams, 'Diaspora and identity', 32.

37 For these style definitions, see below.

38 'DW' = decorated wood and refers to the cataloguing in Lang's *Viking-Age decorated wood*.

39 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 9, 53, no. DW10, fig. 11; Lang, 'Eleventh-century style', p. 176, fig. 4.



22.3 Incised ornament on the late tenth-century Dublin plank fragment DW10 adapted from Lang (upper row). Note the trifurcated frond (X) and vegetal lobe (Y). Comparative details from various media from left to right: Oseberg, Alstad and Möðrufell (middle row); Söllested, Skaill and Mammen (lower row). Various scales.

105.5 by 6.9–19.6 by 2.5–4.9cm, it was found in Fishamble Street, where it had been reused as a house threshold. The plank is damaged and worn on the main face that contains an incised, apparently overall, pattern of flowing trails. The reverse contains two separate incised, unfinished sketches (see below). The identification as a ship's timber seems to be based on the plank's curvature and bevelling. Nevertheless, contemporary evidence suggests that the pattern is far too lightly cut to have served as prow decoration. The decoration continues beyond the edges of the plank, implying that it covered a number of adjoining planks.

While I understand the similarities that Lang cited in using the published drawing as a reference, I have problems with his stylistic attribution to one of the early ninth-century Viking styles found in the wooden carvings from the royal ship at Oseberg, east Norway, buried in 834.⁴⁰ The plank's motif lacks any instance of interlacement and forms a sinuous trail of interlocking tendrils, the split endings of which curl in opposite directions. There is also an elongated tendril with an angular heel and a perpendicular cross-line at the centre of a concave nick. None of this occurs among the Oseberg styles, where the trails belong to motif units and the loose endings are always parallel within one curled

⁴⁰ For the dating of the Oseberg and Gokstad burials, see N. Bonde and A.E. Christensen, 'Dendrochronological dating of the Viking-Age ship burials at Oseberg, Gokstad and Tune, Norway', *Antiquity*, 67 (1993), 575–83.

outline.⁴¹ The tendrils in Jellinge/Mammen style on the oar fittings on the Gokstad ship (buried in 904) provide better parallels,⁴² perhaps also the later Alstad stone, Norway.⁴³ More especially is this true of the silver-inlaid axe found in the chamber grave at Mammen in Jylland, Denmark, buried in 970–1,⁴⁴ and possibly the horse collar from Sølsted on the island of Fyn, Denmark.⁴⁵ The short triple-frond detail on the plank (fig. 22.3, Y) is not in the contoured Oseberg variant, but in that of later Jellinge/Mammen material. A parallel closer to hand is found in the Skaill brooches, the mixed decoration of which not only resembles Manx crosses in the band-shaped animals and fronds, but also more direct Scandinavian artistry, emphasizing the legacy of the early Viking Broa-style in the creation of the Mammen.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the most serious problem in ascribing a stylistic context to this wooden plank is what appears in the illustration to be the vegetal nature of the tiny leaflets on the wider tendril's straighter contour (fig. 22.3, X), though this lies at the broken edge to the plank with the result that correct reading is difficult. Such leaflets are a late feature, normal to transitional Mammen/Ringerike material.⁴⁷ It is interesting that another Dublin wooden artefact shows an equally late feature related to a union-knot. This occurs at the damaged edge of the wooden scraper found in an early

41 For illustration of this Oseberg detail, see, for example, Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, figs 19–28. 42 For the dating of the Gokstad burial, see above, n. 40. For illustration and important stylistic revision of the Gokstad ornament on the bed posts and ship rowlocks to Jellinge/Mammen style, see I. Jansson, 'År 970/971 och vikingatidens kronologi' in M. Iversen (ed.), *Mammen: grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid* (Højbjerg, 1991), esp. pp 227–8, figs 10–11. For further illustration, see Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pls XVII–III; Roesdahl and Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader*, p. 272, no. 167 and cover illustration. 43 Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, no. 58, pl. 34. 44 For a definitive discussion of the stylistic context of the Mammen axe-head, see S.H. Fuglesang, 'The axehead from Bjerringhøj and the Mammen style' in Iversen (ed.), *Mammen*, pp 83–5. See also Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pp 96–7, pl. LI. In a very important discussion ('År 970/971', pp 267–84), Jansson demonstrates the importance for style history of the dendro-datings of the Mammen burial (970–1), the large grave mound at Jelling (958–9) and the circular forts of Trelleborg (980–1) and Fyrkat (c.980 or earlier). 45 The collar is considered typical of the Mammen style as defined by Fuglesang ('Mammen style', pp 83–107), who also includes the great Jelling stone (accepting it as c.960x985). 46 Especially Skaill Brooch IL7, as argued in my discussion of the related metalworker's sketch on a fragment of a bossed-penannular brooch found at Sandmúli, Iceland (O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 116–17, fig. 79). See also Johnson, 'Brooch forms', 340. For the Skaill brooch decoration, see, for example, Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, fig. 53; Fuglesang, 'Mammen style', p. 94, nos 31a–d; R.B.K. Stevenson, 'Notes supplementary to Viking antiquities I–V' in H. Shetelig (ed.), *Viking antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, 6 vols (Oslo, 1940–54), vi, p. 238, fig. 78; J. Graham-Campbell, 'Two Viking-Age silver brooch fragments believed to be from the 1858 Skaill (Orkney) hoard', *PSAS*, 114 (1985), 289–301; Graham-Campbell, 'From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea', pp 147, 149, figs 4–5; J. Graham-Campbell, *The Viking-Age gold and silver of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1995). The later dating of the deposition of the Skaill hoard to 950–70 fits a stylistic context closer to the Mammen axe (c.970), as argued by Fuglesang ('Mammen style', p. 94). 47 Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 69. See, for example, the wooden



22.4 Late tenth-century(?) Dublin 'chair-end' DW12 adapted from Lang (far left). Comparative crest of a lion on the Cammin casket (centre) and relief snout and tendril details on the Gokstad bed-post (far right). Various scales.

tenth-century context at the Temple Bar site in Dublin. The scraper is otherwise considered to be executed in Mammen style, having a triquetra-knot with pointed, curved apexes and pelleted background, as also occurs on a wooden ship's pail lid from the same site and on some tenth-century motif-pieces from Dublin.⁴⁸

I consider the plank to be an incomplete and free creation, extending the norms of its period. It cannot have been very old when reused as a threshold if that house's dating to the mid-tenth century is correct.⁴⁹ The sketches on the underside do not appear to be worn. One is a rather angular copy of the upper face (the nicked tendril with a cross-line) and the other comprises the central section of a tightly woven band-interlace of Insular Viking type common throughout the tenth century and even later.

The second wooden item, DW12 (fig. 22.4), is a finished piece of work measuring 28.1 by 9.9 by 3.6–2.9cm, representing an animal head in flat relief, but damaged at the animal's lower jaw. It was found in Fishamble Street in a context described as 'contemporary' with a pre-eleventh-century house. It was identified by Lang as a furniture detail of early tenth-century 'west Viking' work, thereby providing unique evidence for the presence in Dublin of the early tenth-century Insular version of the Jellinge/Mammen style represented in the Manx and Skaill artwork.⁵⁰

panels from Möðrufell, Iceland (Fuglesang, 'Mammen style', p. 89, no. 13). ⁴⁸ R. Johnson, 'Decorated wood from Temple Bar West, Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin III: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2001* (Dublin, 2002), pp 69–80; Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin*, p. 53. For the motif-pieces, see O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 42 and unpublished examples. ⁴⁹ The Skaill brooches need not be early in the tenth century as Lang thought. The hoard's deposition dates are now revised to 950x970 (Graham-Campbell, *Viking-Age gold and silver*, pp 20, 34, 57, 127). ⁵⁰ Lang, *Viking-Age decorated*

I consider it instead to be a Scandinavian mainland import, while placing it in the same cultural category as the ship plank DW10. I prefer to emphasize the thread-like lines, the parallel bands of tendrils behind the eye and the pointed ear, together with the split ends of the tendrils as found on the wooden tent- and bed-posts in the Gokstad burial.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the almond shape of the eye and the mane-detail are, in my opinion, more decisive for its later dating than Lang allowed.⁵² There are good parallels in the late tenth-century Mammen-style group of objects, especially the Mammen axe and the Cammin casket.⁵³ Furthermore, the use of gilding on the wood recalls that on the Danish horse collars, especially the one from Sølsted already mentioned with regard to DW10. If this reassessment holds, then it could be evidence of Dublin's royal link with York and the Jellinge dynasty at that time.⁵⁴

LANG'S RINGERIKE 'DUBLIN SCHOOL'

The group of eleventh-century wooden carvings from the Dublin excavations, which Lang termed the 'Dublin school', were considered by him to be an Irish version of the Ringerike style, perhaps created in parallel to developments in Scandinavia.⁵⁵ Characteristic, in his view, is the placement of foliate tendrils in close parallel clusters, bound by tightly interlaced 'stays', in contrast to the open fan-like spread of the Scandinavian crested tendrils. He considered this to be a development of Insular features from ninth-century manuscripts such as the Book of Kells and Book of Cerne, as well as some products of the Winchester scriptorium.

These, he argued, were later combined with adaptations of the mainstream Scandinavian versions as they appear in southern England, probably via commercial and ecclesiastical links with southern and western England. He also pointed out the importance of the early eleventh-century stratigraphical dating from the Fishamble Street site of high-quality early products of the Dublin school (the so-called cock's combs mount DW33 and the elaborately decorated

wood, pp 15–16, 46, 53–4; pl. V; Lang, 'Eleventh-century style', p. 175. Graham-Campbell ('From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea', p. 151) echoes the late tenth-century Insular-Viking stylistic context of DW12. ⁵¹ See, for example, the illustrations in Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pls LVI (mane), LV (head, but not the eye shape) and Jansson, 'År 970/971', pp 276–8, figs 10–11. I fully agree with Jansson's reassessment of the Gokstad wood, placing it in a Jellinge/Mammen stylistic context. ⁵² Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 16. ⁵³ See the illustrations in Fuglesang, 'Mammen style', p. 90. ⁵⁴ In their discussion of the stylistic context of the Mammen axe, both Fuglesang ('Mammen style', p. 104) and Jansson ('År 970/971', pp 276–7) emphasize the role of the royal Jellinge dynasty in the development and spread of the Mammen style, and that the same dynasty could well have influenced artistic patronage in York, which is highly relevant for the Dublin–York link. Jansson incidentally also makes a very convincing case for the Gokstad carvings as evidence of Norwegian alliances with the Danish Jellinge dynasty. ⁵⁵ Lang, *Viking-Age decorated*

crook DW35).⁵⁶ Fuglesang has previously argued that the Dublin motif-pieces with Ringerike-style motifs might be the work of fleeing London craftsmen after Knut's reign ended with his death in 1035.⁵⁷ Thus Dublin seems to be not only the port of entry into Ireland for south-eastern English trends in Scandinavian Ringerike style, but also a place where elements of what became Scandinavian Ringerike were previously developed in an Irish setting. While I agree with Lang's general conclusions, I disagree with some of his arguments about specific objects, which I shall discuss below.

THE 'GREAT BEAST' MOTIF IN DUBLIN

There are two wooden items from the Dublin excavations – one considered unfinished by previous commentators – that contain the Scandinavian 'great beast' motif, which when it occurs in Scandinavia is often considered to be associated with royal Danish influence, marking adherence to Harald Bluetooth or Knut, based on the great Jelling stone or runestone evidence respectively.⁵⁸

In Lang's view 'the only mainstream Ringerike' import from southern England among Dublin's decorated wood is DW27 (fig. 22.5), the lower quarter of a flat panel of oak measuring 43.7 by 13.6 by 1.9cm that is deeply carved on one face and was possibly a furniture fitting.⁵⁹ What survives is the damaged, lower central section of a composition of two facing quadrupeds (not hind-quarters of only one animal as stated by Lang, who illustrated the panel upside-down), their crossed front legs fettered by a single or two interlacing figures that terminate below the beast's body.⁶⁰ The panel was found in Christchurch Place, its damaged edges worn, on top of a drain considered to be associated with a late eleventh- to early twelfth-century coin-dated house.⁶¹ As Lang pointed out, the panel shares close stylistic details (the lobed fore-hip spiral and oval chest opening) with the gable fragment of a stone box-tomb found at All Hallows in London. In my view, the Dublin panel is a Dublin version that was left unfinished owing to the carving mistakes evident in the unevenly sized forepaws. It also shares traits with Manx carvings (if my reading is correct) of the right-

wood, pp 20–5. ⁵⁶ Ibid., pp 46–7. ⁵⁷ Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, pp 120–1, recently echoed by Else Roesdahl in her treatment of the Danish motif-pieces, arguing that their introduction was a by-product of the reign of Knut in London. See Pedersen and Roesdahl, 'Ringerike-style animal's head'. ⁵⁸ S.H. Fuglesang, 'Ikonographie der skandinavischen Runensteine der ungeren Wikingerzeit' in H. Rothe (ed.), *Zum Problem der Deutung frühmittelalterliche Bildinhalte* (Sigmaringen, 1986), pp 183–210. ⁵⁹ Lang, 'Eleventh-century style', p. 177, pl. 1; Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 18, 46, 58–9; fig. 25; pl. VIII. ⁶⁰ This description is based on my examination of the object on discovery in 1973. No traces of paint could be found and the uneven execution could not be attributed to damage, strengthening the conclusion that it was an unfinished work (see the report and discussion submitted in 1973 to the excavation archives). ⁶¹ Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 18, 46; H. Murray, *Viking and early medieval buildings in Dublin* (Oxford, 1983), pp 93, 95.

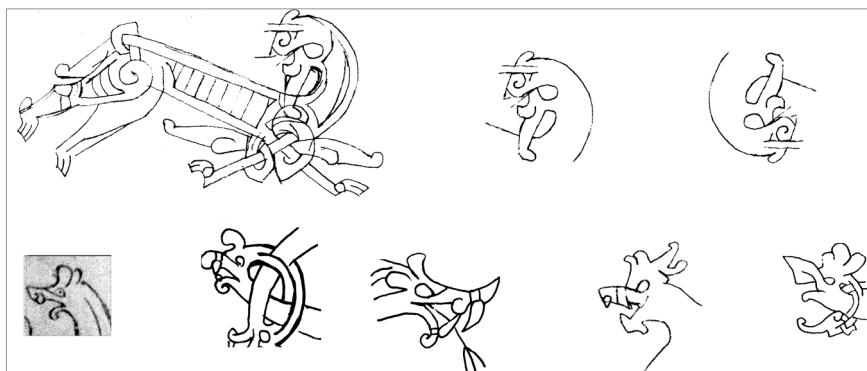
hand fettering element, ending in an arrow-shaped tail, as occurs on the late Jellinge/Ringerike snake-beast on Manx slab no. 117 at Kirk Michael.⁶² The London All Hallows slab and its relative, the larger stone slab from St Paul's cemetery, are usually considered to have been associated with Knut's rule.⁶³ These belong together with the early group of Swedish stone 'box-tombs' decorated in classic Ringerike style (which are memorials rather than graves) that occur mainly in Östergötland and Västergötland, two of Sweden's developing power centres bearing evidence of western traditions.⁶⁴ The best parallel in motif to the Dublin panel occurs at Kållands Råda, Västergötland.⁶⁵

A second great beast motif from Dublin, though much more fluid in style, occurs as a sketch measuring 6 by 3.3cm on an unfinished wooden spatula, DW31 (fig. 22.6), from a mid-eleventh-century context at Christchurch Place.⁶⁶ This incised drawing is of a single, standing quadruped with an elongated hatched, band-shaped body and an upturned head arching over its back, with forelegs crossed and fettered. This sketch differs stylistically from DW27 in important ways. As observed by Lang, DW31 shows a different form of remarkably strong Scandinavian transitional Mammen/Ringerike elements in the lobed tendril of the fetter and in the 'kneepad' feature. Lang rightly stressed the south-eastern English design element, as also the northern English and Manx late Jellinge features in the impossible toss of the head and hatched body,⁶⁷ to which I would add the cuffed bifurcated paw. While the head detail is difficult

62 Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, p. 79, fig. 51; P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx crosses* (London, 1907), p. 166, pl. XL:89A. The Isle of Man has otherwise very little Ringerike ornament, as pointed out by Wilson in his introduction to the second edition of Kermode's corpus (1994), p. 20. 63 Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, nos 87, 88, pls 52–4. For St Paul's slab, see also Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pp 100–4; Roesdahl and Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader*, p. 336, no. 416. 64 Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, nos 73, 74, 79; pls 44, 100–3. Fuglesang's conclusions are confirmed in the latest comprehensive study of these monuments: C. Ljung, *Under runristad hall – Tidigkristna gravmonument i 1000-talets Sverige*, forthcoming. See also C. Ljung, 'Early Christian grave monuments and the eleventh-century context of the monument marker *hvalf*' in *Runes in context. The Seventh International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions* (Oslo, 2010); C. Ljung, 'Gravmonumentet på museets tomt', *Situne Dei* (2010), 115–25; T. Neill and S. Lundberg, 'Förnyad diskussion om "Eskilstunakistorna"', *Fornvännen*, 89 (1994), 145–59, where an association with a social elite possibly related to early christianization activity is proposed. But see M. Vretemark and T. Axelsson, 'The Varnhem archaeological research project: a new insight into the christianization of Västergötland', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 4 (2008), 209–19. A recent study has shown technical differences in the work of the cist carvers and those of runestones (L. Kitzler-Åhfeldt, 'Runstenar och eskilstunakistor i Västergötland: ett exempel på förändrad mobilitet', *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies*, 2 (2012), 145–76). 65 Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, pl. 103:B. 66 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 22–3, 46, 60; fig. 32. 67 Lang, 'Eleventh-century style', p. 176, fig. 4; Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 23, 60; fig. 32. Other purely Insular renderings of the stance of this beast include the standing quadruped on one of the Strokestown motif-pieces (O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 158).



22.5 Detail of the late eleventh-century(?) Dublin panel DW27. Note the arrow-shaped 'tail' / snake-head ending at the right-hand edge. In the lower row (left to right) detail of a spiral-joint and technique on St Paul's slab, London (image reversed for better comparison) and paired opposed beasts with crossed forelegs on a box-tomb from Källands Råda, Sweden. See the beast at the base of Runestone Nä 34 in fig. 22.10. Various scales.



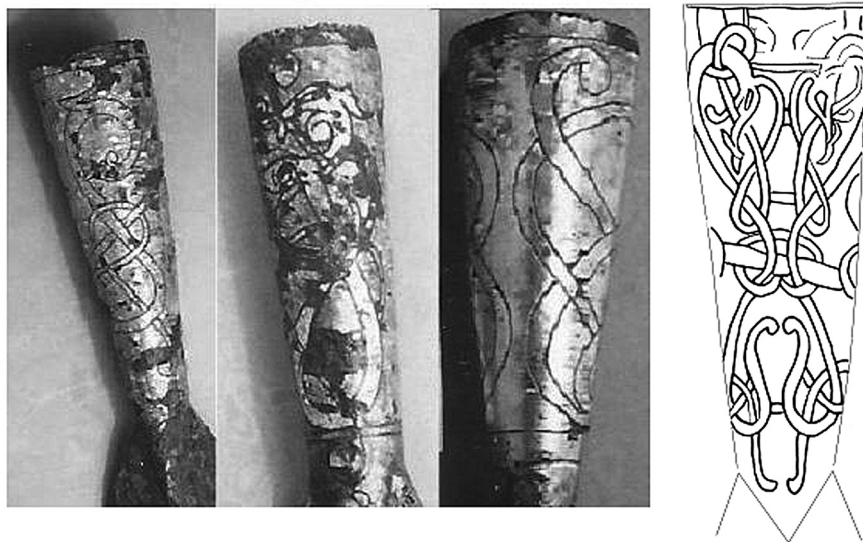
22.6 Lightly sketched beast on the mid-eleventh-century Dublin 'spatula' DW31, with two alternative readings of the head position (upper row) to compare with the eye-line extension in a Winchester-style psalter (far left) and Swedish Runestones Sö 268, Sö 279, Vg 4 and U326 (left to right). Various scales.

to read correctly, the unique eye feature with its line extending to the head contour at first appears to be a mistake, but this detail can also be found on a small number of mainland Swedish runestones,⁶⁸ and on the Ringerike animals in an early eleventh-century Winchester-style psalter, possibly from Bury St Edmunds.⁶⁹ Manuscript art, too, makes its influence felt in the use of dotting to form the outline of a similar pattern alongside, or as background lines.⁷⁰ The design is very competently worked with a freedom of expression within the style norm. The apparent stylistic confusion could well be novelties of a creative artist making an innovative copy. The question remains: was it a Scandinavian or an Irish artist at work?

BALTIC RUNESTONE STYLE IN IRELAND?

I have elsewhere discussed how a rib-bone motif-piece from a late eleventh-century context in Winetavern Street, Dublin, finds its best parallels not in Irish but in Gotlandic artwork,⁷¹ emulating the runestone-style snakes on the silver-inlaid Baltic weapons, in this case the sword guards.⁷² To this group perhaps also belongs the copper-alloy sword guard rescued from the Smalls Reef, Pembrokeshire, off the Welsh coast.⁷³ With its mixture of Irish technique of niello and silver-inlay, runestone-style heads, Mammen-style lateral fronds and Romanesque-style bipeds, it is a hybrid that one might expect from Dublin or, more likely, Man on account of the close Manx parallels to the frond detail, which does not occur at Dublin.⁷⁴

68 Two examples are Runestone Vg 4 Stora Ek (H. Jungner and E. Svärdström, *Västergötlands runinskrifter*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1940–70), pp 57, 6–10, pls 3, 4; Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, no. 75, pl. 45D; Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, fig. 62a) and Runestone Sö 279 Strängnäs (E. Brate and E. Wessén, *Södermanlands runinskrifter*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1924–36), pp 243–4, pl. 137; Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, fig. 63c). 69 Vatican Library, MS Reg. lat. 12. See Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, pp 71, 74, 199; no. 111; pl. 72A. 70 See, for example, the Book of Mac Durnan, chi-rho page, and Southampton Psalter, David and the Lion and David and Goliath pages (F. Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions (800–1020AD)* (London, 1967), colour pls I, M, N). Some later examples in association with Ringerike foliage include Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, p. 230 (J.G. Alexander, *Anglo-Saxon illumination in Oxford libraries* (Oxford, 1970), pl. 20). 71 O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, pp 61–2, no. 55; pls 21, 22; figs 278–83; O'Meadhra, 'Remarks on a sword pattern', pp 527–30, 534. 72 O'Meadhra, 'Remarks on a sword pattern', p. 530. The Viking-Age Gotlandic artefact material is now extensively catalogued and analysed in L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, 4 vols (Stockholm, 1995–2006). See also L. Thunmark-Nylén, 'Churchyard finds from Gotland (eleventh–twelfth centuries)' in I. Jansson (ed.), *Archaeology east and west of the Baltic. Papers from the Second Estonian–Swedish Archaeological Symposium, Sigtuna, May 1991* (Stockholm, 1995), pp 162–93; W. Holmqvist, 'Viking art in the eleventh century', *Acta Archaeologica*, 12 (1951), 1–56; W. Holmqvist, *Övergångstidens metallkonst* (Stockholm, 1963), p. 172, fig. 46. See further below. 73 M. Redknap, *Vikings in Wales: an archaeological quest* (Cardiff, 2000), p. 55. 74 See, for example,



22.7 Examples of late Viking Baltic spearhead art from Finland (KM 1063, 2456:27, 1174:8) and Gotland (Kysings). Note the close comparison in pl. 21. Various scales.

The silvered weapons discussed here (fig. 22.7) are found around the Baltic Sea, mainly in Finland and to a lesser extent in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.⁷⁵ These weapons are usually considered on stylistic grounds to be products of Gotland or Uppland, even though only one has been found on Gotland.⁷⁶ Some misunderstood renderings are now being considered local copies,⁷⁷ but this explanation is problematic since many mistakes also occur among the mainland Swedish runestones. They are considered to be fashion markers adopted by those who affiliated themselves with the ruling elite and used on both sides of the Baltic, though surviving only in eastern areas because of the continuing tradition there of burying weapons in warrior graves. The weapon decoration

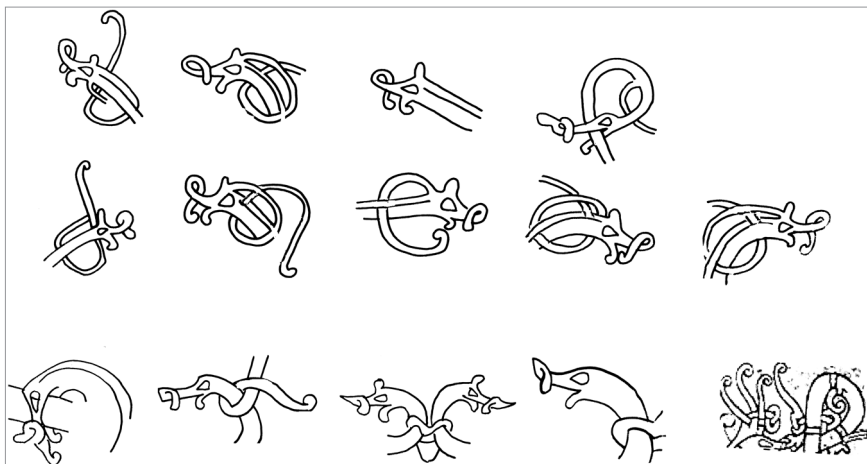
the lateral fronds that touch the field sides on the Alstad and Kirk Bradden stones (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, fig. 59 for Alstad; pl. XLVa for Kirk Bradden). ⁷⁵ A 1993 survey of the spearheads gave the following relative numbers: Finland (64) Estland (28), Latvia (16) and Lettland (unknown) (M. Mägi-Lõugas, 'On the relations between the countries around the Baltic as indicated by the background of Viking-Age spearhead ornament', *Fornvännen*, 1993:4 (1993), 211–21). See also M. Mägi, *At the crossroads of space and time: graves, changing society and ideology on Saaremaa (Ösel), 9th–13th centuries AD* (Tallin, 2002); I. Jets, 'Scandinavian late Viking-Age art styles as a part of the visual display of warriors in eleventh century Estonia', *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, 16 (2012), 118–39; P.-L. Lehtosalo-Hilander, 'Viking-Age spearheads in Finland' in S.-O. Lindquist and B. Radhe (eds), *Society and trade in the Baltic during the Viking Age ...* (Visby, 1985), pp 237–50. ⁷⁶ For the Gotlandic spearhead found at Kysings, Vall (SHM 5826), see Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, fig. 248:4a–d; iv, p. 761; Mägi-Lõugas, 'On the relations', 217. ⁷⁷ Mägi-Lõugas, 'On the relations', 220.

divides stylistically into three groups, the earliest being common in Norway, showing Ringerike-style vegetal ornamentation and the latest Urnes sinuous animal patterns of typical Romanesque V-shaped layout with outstretched forepaw.⁷⁸ The decoration discussed here belongs to the middle group in the transitional Ringerike/Urnes style, often termed 'runestone style' because of its dominance in that material and the major style variant found on Gotland.⁷⁹ The only find of such a spearhead from Gotland belongs to this group. At least two Ringerike-style vegetal examples are known from England⁸⁰ and the Urnes spearheads possibly influenced the incised decoration on the English-made silver-coated iron Durham crozier (previously attributed to Flambard's grave).⁸¹ In what follows, I suggest that the snake decoration on the Clonmacnoise crozier and Dublin wooden handle DW49 might have been inspired by the same decorative tradition as these weapons.

THE CLONMACNOISE CROZIER

This copper-alloy encased crozier from Clonmacnoise, also known as the Abbot's Crozier, with its high-quality snake ornament executed in silver inlay was among one of the first Irish objects to be discussed by archaeologists with regard to Scandinavian/Irish interchange of motifs and has long been considered 'Irish work under strong influence of a Scandinavian artisan'.⁸² The influence from Swedish runestones and Baltic spearheads is strong in the composition and head detail and in the cuffed bifurcated paws of the lions on the upper knop, though their stance and curled manes have strong Romanesque elements that have parallels in Dublin and Man.⁸³ The head detail can also be found among the

⁷⁸ A type related to the version of Irish Urnes snakes as found on, for example, the sub-rectangular panels on the Cross of Cong and the Romanesque/Anglian-influenced Urnes of the Tuam and Glendalough high crosses, as recognized by Stalley (see O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 163 with references). ⁷⁹ E. Nylén, 'Finskt, gotländskt eller nordiskt? Kring ett ovanligt exempel på sen runstensornamentik', *Honos Ella Kivikoski* (Helsinki, 1973), pp 161–7. ⁸⁰ Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, pls 79:A, 81:A–B. ⁸¹ Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, p. 118, fig. 68. In her definitive catalogue of the Urnes style in England, Olwyn Owen classed it as 'Urnes of English manufacture' (her catalogue, no. 16). See now O. Owen, 'The strange beast that is the English Urnes style' in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw. Select papers from the proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21–30 August 1997* (Oxford, 2001), pp 201–22. ⁸² S. Lindqvist, 'Yngre Vikingastilar' in H. Shetelig (ed.), *Kunst* (Stockholm, 1931), p. 168 (my trans.), termed 'Hiberno-Danish style' according to G. Coffey, *Guide to the Celtic antiquities of the Christian period, preserved in the National Museum, Dublin* (Dublin, 1910), p. 62. This crozier is treated, for example, in Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, pp 67, 165–6, no. 77; see also R. Ó Floinn, 'Clonmacnoise: art and patronage in the early medieval period' in C. Bourke (ed.), *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain* (Belfast, 1995), pp 251–60. ⁸³ On an unfinished casting of a disc-shaped mount from High Street, Dublin, and a completed and used example found on the Isle of Man (see O'Meadhra,



22.8 Clonmacnoise crozier-head snakes (two upper rows). The tufted foreheads and furred snouts find parallels in Swedish Runestones Sö 356, U372, U212 and U431 (lower row). Lateral curls and knots are on Husaby Slab Vg 52 (far right). Various scales.

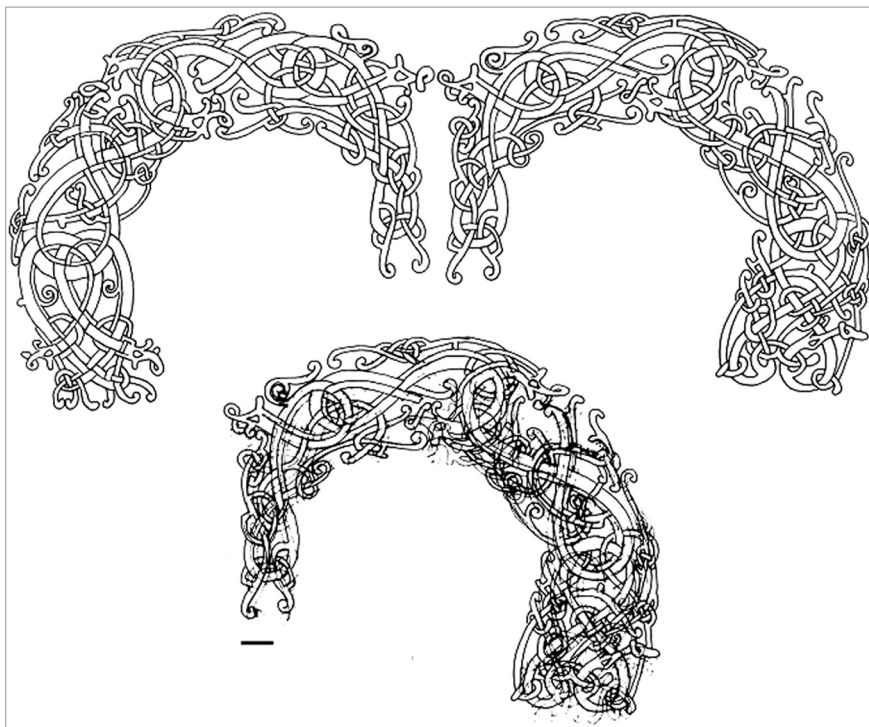
Scandinavian traits on some Dublin motif-pieces⁸⁴ and the more highly decorated of the motif-pieces from Waterford together with a Scandinavian version (fig. 22.8).⁸⁵ Many other details on this crozier can be matched on the Dublin motif-pieces, as can other surviving decorated items associated with the monastery, suggesting that Clonmacnoise employed Dublin-trained artisans.⁸⁶ Clonmacnoise has itself produced some motif-pieces with simple Insular interlace and geometrical border motifs.⁸⁷ These relate well to metalwork

Motif-pieces, ii, p. 50, fig. 33d). On Romanesque features in metalwork of this period, see Bertelsen, 'Urnesfibler i Danmark', pp 345–70; O.H. Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', *Acta Archaeologica*, 26 (1955), 1–30; Fuglesang, 'Stylistic groups', p. 125; R. Ó Floinn, 'Schools of metalworking in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland' in Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art*, p. 186; R. Ó Floinn, *Irish shrines and reliquaries of the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1994), p. 38. The Lund workshop, dated stratigraphically to the early twelfth century, included unfinished work with similar false-filigree to that on the upper panels of the knop of the Cross of Cong (see Wilson *Vikingatidens konst*, p. 214, fig. 199; F. Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period (1020–1170AD)* (London, 1970), colour pl. N). See also G. Murray, 'The Cross of Cong and some aspects of goldsmithing in pre-Norman Ireland', *Historical Metallurgy*, 40 (2006), 49–67.

⁸⁴ O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 162. ⁸⁵ O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, nos 26, 37; O'Meadhra, 'Motif-pieces and other bone (Waterford)', pp 51–3.

⁸⁶ The Dublin motif-pieces in question are O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, nos 26, 32; cf. Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, p. 166. On the similarity of foliage patterns in the Dublin motif-pieces and the Crucifixion plaque considered from Clonmacnoise, see R. Johnson, 'Irish Crucifixion plaques: Viking or Romanesque?', *JRSAI*, 128 (1998), 95–106, fig. 34.

⁸⁷ O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, pp 22, 35, no. 17, pl. 4; ii, pp 33–4; O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 160. A more recent find of a motif-piece from settlement excavations is illustrated in C. Manning, *Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1994), p. 47.



22.9 The Clonmacnoise crozier head. The overall decoration of snake interlace on the two faces of the crook are here superimposed to show the coinciding layout of key features.
Scale marker = 1cm.

attributed to the site, but are not relevant to the sophisticated patterns on the crozier under discussion.

MEASURED SYMMETRY

A previously unnoticed but highly important feature of the decoration of the Clonmacnoise crozier is the almost identical layout of the two differing designs on opposing faces of the upper section of the crook (fig. 22.9). This is suggestive of the use of a template or some form of measurement transfer. Note that the details do not match, so that the transfer marked only the pattern layout.

No similar layout trick has been observed on comparable objects such as the highly decorated wooden crook, DW35, from Dublin. Nevertheless, as I have explained elsewhere, the marking out of field size has been noted on some of the Dublin motif-pieces.⁸⁸ The study of the use of templates and measuring aids is

⁸⁸ For example, O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 55; O'Meadhra, 'Remarks on a sword pattern', p. 529.

still in its infancy, but while evidence exists for stone carving, manuscripts and other objects in both the Insular and the Scandinavian areas, it is considered an Insular trait.⁸⁹

DUBLIN WOODEN KNIFE HANDLE, DW 49

The decorated wooden knife handle (DW 49) from Christchurch Place, Dublin, was found stuck into the wall of a woodworker's workshop that clearly dates stratigraphically to the mid- to late eleventh century.⁹⁰ The decoration is delicately incised and was worn down before deposition. A careful drawing was made on discovery and was used in the analysis presented here (pl. 21).⁹¹ The motif consists of two opposed and slightly different looping snakes linked at their splayed jaws. Lang and Farnes before him have shown that the handle's decoration is an Irish rendering of the fluidly expanding snake bodies of the Swedish Urnes-style runestones such as those on Öland, which are noted for their sylph-like snakes and symmetrical compositions.⁹² Lang also compared its wings and free-flowing trails to a late phase of Norwegian renderings of the Urnes style,⁹³ but I would rather emphasize the parallels in the Gotlandic area where we find paired snake patterns linked at the head by a union-knot feature, split bands and limbs or wing joints, with cross bands, on runestones and metalwork.⁹⁴ On the Baltic spearheads (either made in, or heavily influenced by, Gotland) we even find similar narrow, ribbon-like bodies equally loosely linked

89 For important amendments to Bailey and Lang's discoveries indicating the lack of grids on the Skaill material, see Graham-Campbell, 'From Scandinavia to the Irish Sea', pp 145–8 with references. See also O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, pp 126–7. The Scandinavian evidence is treated in L. Kitzler-Åhlfelt, 'Celtic and continental handicraft traditions: template use on Gotlandic picture stones analysed by 3D-scanning' in A. Ney et al. (eds), *Á austrvega: saga and east Scandinavia ...*, 2 vols (Gävle, 2009), i, pp 498–505. 90 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 27, fig. 43; p. 69, DW 49. 91 This record is by site-draughtsman Patrick Healy, well known for the accuracy of his drawings. I am grateful to Breandán Ó Riordáin for access to this drawing and for first recognizing the mask motif (pers. comm.). 92 Farnes, 'Scandinavian Urnes style', pp 134–5; O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', p. 163. Lang (*Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 27) cites Runestone ÖI 27, Sandby, Öland, from S. Söderberg and E. Brate, *Ölands runinskrifter*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1900–6), i, p. 82. 93 Lang (*Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 27) cites as an example the Romanesque stave church at Torpo, Norway (cf. Roesdahl and Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader*, p. 237, no. 40). 94 For Gotland Runestones G113 (Ardre) and G134–5 (Sjønhem), see S.B.F. Jansson et al., *Gotlands runinskrifter*, 2 vols of 3 (Stockholm, 1962–78), pls 62, 63, 82–5 respectively; Jansson, *Runes of Sweden*, fig. 22 (Sjønhem); Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pls LXXI (Ardre), LXXIIIa (drum brooch, Tjängdarve). See also the snakes on the well-known silver bowl from the hoard at Lilla Valla, Rute, Gotland (SHM 3099) (Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. LXIIIa; D.M. Wilson, 'Introduction to Scandinavian art of the Viking Age', and catalogue entries in *Rosc '71: the poetry of vision. An international exhibition of modern art from outside Ireland and Viking-Age art* (Dublin, 1971), p. 188, no. 63; Graham-

with a simplistic rendering of the union-knot. The split-strand feature also occurs on many mainland runestones.⁹⁵ The placement of the eye in the centre of a strand is unique, but neither the forward-pointed eye nor the uneven splayed jaws are Irish,⁹⁶ even though they possibly relate to the Dublin motif-piece version of the evenly splayed curled jaws of the 'Kells crozier style' and its eleventh-century development, such as on the tiny silvered panels of the shrines of the Soiscél Molaise (1001–25) and the Cathach (c.1062–98, the date relative to inscription uncertain since it was inserted upside-down).⁹⁷ The short ear is a Gotlandic feature.⁹⁸ This is clearly a poor creation, copying Scandinavian norms and closely linked to the Dublin motif-pieces previously discussed as being related to this Gotlandic/Baltic weapon style.⁹⁹

SCANDINAVIAN HUMAN MASKS AND DUAL READINGS

I should like to draw attention to another important aspect of the decoration on handle DW49 that Lang did not mention and that indicates further association with Scandinavian material. This is the ambiguity offered by two alternative readings of the motif (pl. 21). Though rare examples are known in purely Insular material,¹⁰⁰ dual meanings of this sort are normally considered a trait of Germanic art. In southern Scandinavian Ringerike-style runestones this feature

Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, no. 527). Thunmark-Nylén (pers. comm.) questions whether the dating of this bowl – one of the key finds in runestone-style dating – is so firmly to c.1050 as previously considered. This is a *terminus post quem* date for the hoard based on the circulation dates of the latest coins in the hoard, found in two parts (SHM 3099, 3134). The bowl could have been added at any time, even later. ⁹⁵ For example, Runestones U383 from St Mary's Church, Sigtuna (E. Wessén and S.B.F. Jansson, *Upplands runinskrifter*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1949–51), ii, p. 153; Wilson, *Rosc* '71, p. 192, no. 67) and G134–5 (Sjonhem) mentioned in previous note. ⁹⁶ Lang (*Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 28) considered uneven jaws, on the contrary, to be an Irish feature. For illustration of Gotlandic examples in metalwork, see Holmqvist, *Övergångstidens metallkunst*, fig. 66. ⁹⁷ Both shrines could have been produced by Dublin-trained craftsmen, to judge by the large number of motif-pieces showing this style that lie concentrated in the Christchurch Place area (O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', pp 161–2; Johnson, 'On the dating', 142–7). The Soiscél Molaise is fully discussed in R. Ó Floinn, 'The Soiscél Molaise', *Clogher Record*, 13 (1989), 51–63; Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, no. 75. ⁹⁸ E. Nylén, *Gotländischer Runensteinstil, i: Ein reich geschnitztes Satteldetail aus der späten Wikingerzeit. Zu einer zeitraubenden Rekonstruktionsarbeit* (Stockholm, 1972). When characterizing the Gotlandic runestone-style, Nylén (also in 'Finskt, gotländskt eller nordiskt?', p. 167) warned of the pitfalls in relying too heavily on surviving distribution patterns, since burial traditions have caused Gotland (and the west Baltic countries) to be over-represented in the archaeological find material. Finds of similar artefacts from the Danelaw are now somewhat counteracting the Gotlandic slant for belts and horse-trappings at least (see also above, n. 20). ⁹⁹ O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i–ii, no. 55, patterns 55A1, 55B1; O'Meadhra, 'Remarks on a sword pattern', pp 527–35. ¹⁰⁰ R.B.K. Stevenson, 'Aspects of ambiguity in crosses and interlace', *UJA*, 3rd ser., 44–5 (1981–2), 1–27.



22.10 Dual readings of the Bibury slab and Runestone U905, Vänge (left). Human face-masks with horns, moustache and beard on Runestones Da 314, Lund, and Näs 34, Nasta, and (below, right) on a metal terminal of no location in Ireland. Lower row, left: wing detail on Runestone Ö1 27, Sandby, on motif-piece NMI, E81:2205 from Dublin, and on a silver bowl from Lilla Valla, Gotland. Various scales.

has been isolated as typical for the area.¹⁰¹ A related type of ambiguity occurs on the Bibury slab, Gloucestershire, and its close relative from Killeany, Co. Galway.¹⁰² At Bibury (fig. 22.10) two human heads and two animal heads share reverse readings of the same decorative scheme, which interplays with the background space; at Killeany the base snake-heads are clear, but instead of human heads there is a vegetal detail.

There are two examples of dual readings, neither of which has been previously identified, that provide good parallels to the Dublin handle, DW49. One is Swedish, the other Irish. The Swedish example is Runestone U905, Vänge, Uppland (fig. 22.10),¹⁰³ considered from its orthography and animal style

¹⁰¹ H. Christiansson, *South Scandinavian style* (Uppsala, 1959), pp 95–6. ¹⁰² Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, no. 90, pl. 55A (Bibury), no. 93, pl. 56B (Killeany); Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. LXVIII (Bibury); Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, p. 137, fig. 13 (Killeany). ¹⁰³ Jansson, *Runes of Sweden*, fig. 3; Wessén and Jansson, *Upplands*

to be late in the Upplandic runestone series, that is to say, the late eleventh or early twelfth century. It combines the image of two affronted lion-like animals with that of an animal seen from above created by their almost abutting feet. The Irish example is a copper-alloy ferrule inlaid with niello and silver of unknown provenance (NMI, W7), considered by Ragnall Ó Floinn to be a drinking-horn terminal of his St Laichtín's arm-shrine school of metalworking.¹⁰⁴ What has not been observed before is that the decoration of intertwining snakes can also be read as a human mask with heavy eyebrows.

Accordingly, in this wooden knife handle (DW49) from Dublin and perhaps also in the copper-alloy ferrule (W7) of unknown provenance in Ireland, we see a subtle awareness of the inner meaning attached to a Scandinavian trait being applied in an Irish context. The irregularities in the design might be caused by ineptitude. The workmanship is not so skilled as on other, stylistically related, wooden knife handles from Dublin (for example, DW45 and DW46). Could the decoration on DW49 and even on W7 have been copied by Irishmen directly from Scandinavian (Baltic) models, or are they evidence of a Scandinavian's recollections?

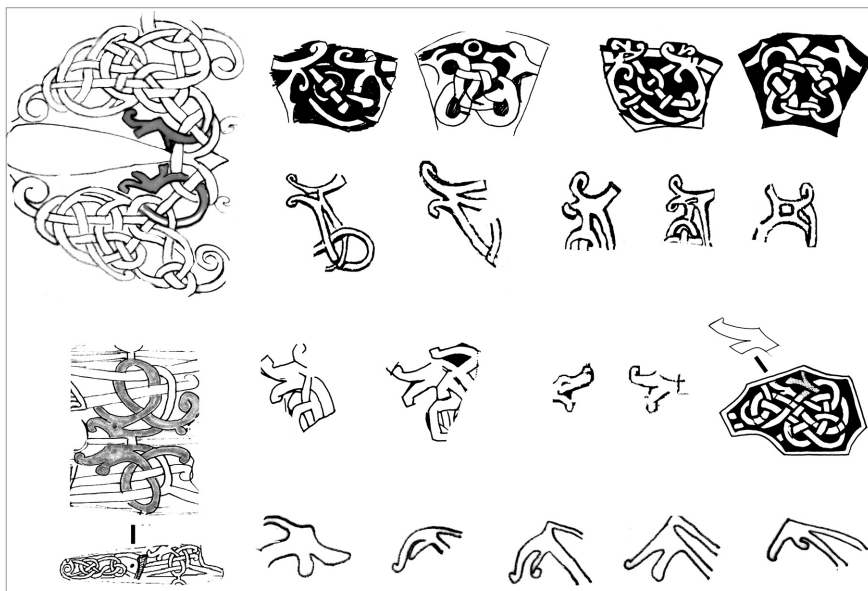
SCANDINAVIAN AND IRISH SKETCHES ON THE ONE OBJECT

Both Scandinavian-Irish and Irish versions of motifs on the same object are a feature of much eleventh- to twelfth-century Irish metalwork. On the Cathach shrine, however, these are placed upside-down to one another and may reflect two different periods of work or assembly (see above). This shrine is often discussed with regard to its related motif-pieces from Dublin that show native and foreign designs side-by-side on the same piece and how this echoes the dual nationality expressed in the name of the metalworker of that shrine, Sitric Mac Aedha, possibly the son of a craftsman documented as having been associated with the monastery at Kells.¹⁰⁵ A fascinating and different example among the Dublin motif-pieces shows two ways of dealing with the same motif (fig. 22.11). Here we find a native Irish-style layout sketch on the reverse side of two Ringerike-style versions of the same motif – an almost completed rendering, but with cutting mistakes and lacking the Scandinavian nose flap of its model, together with a layout sketch for the same.¹⁰⁶

runinskrifter, pp 631–4, fig. 431. ¹⁰⁴ Ó Floinn, 'Schools of metalworking', p. 183, fig. 2e; W. Wilde, *A descriptive catalogue of the antiquities of animal materials and bronze in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1861), pp 639–40, fig. 536. Wilde refers to two identical ferrules, W7 and W8, but Ó Floinn refers to only one. ¹⁰⁵ Ó Riordáin, *Viking and medieval Dublin*, p. 15; Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, nos 56, 102; O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, no. 32. On whether the craftsman's name Sitric need not mean that he was Scandinavian but of Hiberno-Norse sympathy, see the discussion in O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements', pp 164–5; O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, ii, p. 104. ¹⁰⁶ O'Meadhra,



22.11 Irish and Scandinavian work on the same Dublin motif-piece NMI, E71:3318.
Scale line = 1cm



22.12 Parallel developments in Gotland (upper row) and Ireland of non-typical eleventh-century(?) snake interlace. Upper row, left to right: sword-chape from Hejdeby and button-on-bow brooches from Ryfles and Laxare (SHM 14462, 9165). Lower rows, left to right: metal terminal W7 from no location in Ireland compared to head details on Waterford motif-piece E527:1614:4 (first row); Dublin motif-pieces NMI, E71:4088, 5282, 5706 (second row); and the Clogán Óir bell shrine (third row). Various scales.

COPIES OR PARALLEL CREATIONS?

An interesting possibility of parallel development at opposite ends of the Viking world (or less likely direct influence) is raised by a small number of metalwork finds from Gotland that are difficult to place within the mass-produced Gotlandic repertoire. They have been compared to counterparts in Irish material

Motif-pieces, i, pp 46–7, no. 35, pls 11–12, figs 140–2 (pattern 35B1); fig. 145 (pattern 35A2); figs 145, 146–7 (pattern 35A1).

and are the subject of ongoing investigation by the present author.¹⁰⁷ One is a bronze sword-chape from Hejdeby (fig. 22.12).¹⁰⁸ The type of object is Gotlandic but not the decoration, though clearly a version of the native runestone style in its line-flow and bifurcating-ribbon composition. The relief technique and especially the snake-head type find their best parallel in Irish finds such as the drinking-horn ferrule W7 just discussed, the Shrine of St Senan's Bell (Clogán Óir) and its two related Dublin motif-pieces.¹⁰⁹

In this regard it is interesting that some mid- to late tenth- to eleventh-century Gotlandic and eastern Baltic metalwork also contains a special version of the Anglo-Jellinge derived paired band-shaped animals and crouched bipeds in a parallel development to that of the Kells crozier-style animals, as mentioned above. The Gotlandic examples, however, that occur with runestone-style snakes usually share the latter's folded snout detail.¹¹⁰ This might be a native development relating to the Anglo-Saxon influence argued for in the niello and silver inlay techniques (but not ornament) in Gotlandic metalwork.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ These items, all in runestone style, include the following: an unfinished cast strap-end (or book clasp?) from Väte (SHM 13591) (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, fig. 288:8; iv, p. 756; L. Thunmark-Nylén, 'Churchyard finds from Gotland (eleventh to twelfth centuries)' in I. Jansson (ed.), *Archaeology east and west of the Baltic. Papers from the Second Estonian-Swedish Archaeological Symposium, Sigtuna, May 1991* (Stockholm, 1995), p. 187, n. 5); a worn openwork mount from Garda (GF C10432) that recalls the chain-fittings on the Misach shrine (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, fig. 288:9; iv, p. 218); two similar cast bronze openwork snake-head (reliquary?) terminals compared to the ornate crook-ends (DW35–38) from the Dublin excavations, one unfinished from Eskelhem (SHM 8312) (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, iii, p. 368; iv, p. 148), the other finished of no location in Gotland (SHM 12194) (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, iii, p. 368; iv, p. 901; Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, no. 503 and cf. Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. LXXIIIb); two similar bronze mace-heads from an unknown location in Gotland (SHM 8744:1) (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, fig. 264:3; iv, p. 897) and Grötlingbo (SHM 27778:14:1) (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, i, fig. 85:2; iv, p. 262; Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, no. 277) compared to the snake-headed knop on the base of the Cross of Cong (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, iii, pp 316–17, 694); and finally the runestone-style strap dividers Type 5 that are compared to the mounts on the Irish drinking horn in Tongeren (Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, figs 137:16–19, 138:2–7; iii, p. 405, n. 27). ¹⁰⁸ Hejdeby (SHM 4531). See Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, fig. 232:6; iv, p. 378; Thunmark-Nylén, 'Churchyard finds', p. 187, n. 5. ¹⁰⁹ O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces*, i, pp 50–1, nos 38, 39, patterns 38A9–10, 39A4–5, figs 153–6, 172–3. For the Clogán Óir, see Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, pp 187–9, no. 90, first observed in Ó Ríordáin, *Viking and medieval Dublin*, p. 15. ¹¹⁰ For example, in the cast decoration on the sword-hilt from Suontaka, Finland, considered Finnish work under close influence of the Gotlandic material: see O. Kesitalo, 'Suontaka-svärdet', *Suomen Museo*, 76 (1969), fig. 11; Nylén, 'Finskt, gotländskt eller nordiskt?', pp 164–7, fig. 1; Lehtosalo-Hilander, 'Viking-Age spearheads'; Roesdahl and Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader*, pp 185, 286, no. 220a. For Gotlandic parallels on the animal-headed brooches, see, for example, Hemse (SHM 5239) in Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, ii, fig. 30:3–5; Holmqvist, *Övergångstidens metallkunst*, fig. 66. ¹¹¹ Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pp 116–17; Wilson, *Vikingatidens konst*, pp 143–51; Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts*, nos

In general, however, the growing evidence of unfinished artwork in Ringerike-, Urnes- and runestone-style from early Scandinavian towns such as Trondheim, Bergen, Oslo, Lund and Sigtuna as yet shows no overlap with the Dublin evidence; instead, each town seems to have its own distinct variants, indicating a similar partial disregard for the established norm or perhaps unintentional mistakes, but with attention paid to correct renderings of head, tendril and foot detail.¹¹² It is as if the artists of the period were as concerned as style historians of today with demarcating the distinctive motif-detail in Scandinavian versus Irish animal art in the form of the foot (frond or trotter/hoof versus the Irish ball and claw), eye (pointed forwards versus the Irish oval/round backward-pointed) and snout/upper lip (nose flap versus the Irish curl), while line-flow, figure shape, technique and iconography form other vital diagnostics.

FINAL REMARKS

When discussing creativity and copying on the basis of comparison with other surviving evidence, it is very important to bear in mind that survival more often reflects archaeological and depositional activity than the original situation. The wealth of finds from the Dublin excavations and metal-detector activity in England and Denmark are classic examples of how recovery can bias the archaeological record. The approximately 2,500 registered Swedish runestones provide a wealth of potential parallels because of their high survival due to the resilience of stone and the large number once created. Similarly, eleventh- to twelfth-century Gotland and the Baltic countries uniquely provide weapons and items of dress and accoutrement because the practice of including these in burials continued there later than elsewhere.

There is also the problem of chronology. Even though we have a growing number of fixed points for certain objects provided by inscription and dendrochronology, subjective assessment of comparative style criteria remains our main resource when dating decorated material, at best aided by relative dating of find-context and well-stratified layer sequences.¹¹³ Interpreting the

199, 127; D.M. Wilson, 'Scandinavian influence in the Irish Sea region in the Viking Age' in T. Scott and P. Starkey (eds), *The Middle Ages in the north-west* (Oxford, 1995), pp 37–57. 112 See, for example, O'Meadhra, 'Skisser i urnes-/runstenstil', 85–96, figs 1–5; Kitzler-Åhfeldt, 'Några träfynd i Sigtuna', fig. 1; Fuglesang, 'Woodcarvers'; Roesdahl and Wilson (eds), *From Viking to crusader*, nos 564, 567–70; p. 139, fig. 4; A. Folkvord, 'Dekorerte tresaker fra folkebibliotekstomta i Trondheim: beskrivelse, analyse og vurdering' (MA, University of Oslo, 2007); S.H. Fuglesang, 'Ornament', 'Spoons' in E. Schia (ed.), *De arkeologiske utgravninger i Gamlehyen Oslo* (Oslo, 1991), pp 159–250. 113 Important contributions on chronology are offered by both Wilson and Fuglesang. For an example of an excellent overview of the results of conflicting subjective and absolute style dating for Scandinavian artwork, see the chart in Jansson, 'År 970/971', p. 273, fig. 6. See also Thunmark-Nylén,

date-ranges for individual finds from well-stratified settlement sites with good coin-sequenced layers and dendrochronologically dated structures must always take stock of pit-digging, repairs and building activity that can displace the original depositional context of individual items.

Finally, there is the question of comparing like with like. In Ireland, outside the Hiberno-Norse towns, the surviving decorated material is mainly ecclesiastical, while in Scandinavia it is mainly secular. Urban excavations over the last few decades are to some extent now correcting the balance and some of the results have been discussed here.¹¹⁴

'Churchyard finds'; Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands*, iii, pp 671–94. The absolute date-ranges by inscription for the manufacture of some eleventh- to twelfth-century Irish shrines are well-known fixed points, but even these are the subject of constant refining. See, for example, Ó Floinn's work on the shrines of the Soiscél Molaise and Stowe Missal (*Irish shrines and reliquaries*, with references). **114** This essay draws on my research into Scandinavian/Irish relations in late Viking art as holder of the first Royal Irish Academy Bicentennial Research Fellowship in the 1980s – a study beyond style labels on which further publication is pending. I wish to record my debt to the Royal Irish Academy for the generous research opportunity offered by the award. In acknowledgment of this privilege, I assisted my former research base, the library of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, in making a generous donation in 1986 to the library of the Royal Irish Academy of a full set of the official printed illustrated corpus of the Swedish runestones (*Sveriges runinskrifter*, vols i–xv), in order to advance Irish research into the extensive, but at that time mainly inaccessible, comparative Swedish material. My Nordic artefact studies have been further assisted by the Berit Wallenberg foundation, Letterstedtska Society, Swedish-Finnish Cultural Fund of the Nordic Association and Mårten Stenberger Fund, Gotland. The title of this essay highlights a basic problem of identification raised by closer familiarity with this evidence. I am grateful to the present editors for the opportunity of publication in this important volume. DigiWebb at Alma Folkhögskolan, Stockholm, has assisted me in preparing my line drawings and photographs for digital publication.

Practice makes perfect? Motif-pieces as tools of communication and the exchange of tacit artistic knowledge in Viking-Age Dublin

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As products of socialized individuals, motif-pieces from Hiberno-Norse contexts in Dublin display a range of particular behaviour. Around 250 motif-pieces have been discovered there, which far surpasses the numbers from any other archaeological site. The motifs exhibit stylistic traits of both Insular and Norse traditions, in addition to hybrid versions of these, which are reflective of the cultural environment in which they were made. The carved motifs differ widely in terms of quality and adherence to strict stylistic 'norms'. As art and as objects, motif-pieces are products of cognitive, technological and social processes. It is these processes that define the framework and enable production to take place. In what way is this relationship reflected through the motif-pieces? The following essay will examine, using certain quality criteria, how the production of motif-pieces could be perceived as a communicative activity and one that was highly organized. In my approach, the concept of quality is not always indicative of the craftsman's potential for mastering the art, but rather his achieved level of skill through the embodiment of style and practical knowledge.

The well-known excavated material from the urban Viking-Age contexts of Dublin has produced large-scale and diverse waste material from crafts and workshop activity. Among this material, a rather peculiar group of artefacts called 'motif-pieces' has been found. These are made from various materials, but are most typically of animal bone and could be regarded as secondary products resulting from other activities, such as casting and metalworking. Motif-pieces have also been discovered at peripheral secular and monastic settlements in Ireland, but they are not a very common feature of known production sites and usually appear in significantly smaller numbers outside Viking Dublin. The large-scale production and usage of motif-pieces in Dublin occurred at a time when the development of new social markers and the shaping of new social practices were taking place. In addition, they occurred within a timeframe when social and political identities were continuously challenged by the interaction of diverse cultures. Combined, these aspects suggest that something particular is taking place in Viking Dublin and something that involved the experimental working of artistic styles, innovative craft techniques and a confluence of internal social and cultural movements.

The exact function of motif-pieces in a production or workshop context is not known. Several theories have been proposed, many of which place the motif-pieces in association with metalworking activity.¹ The most comprehensive and in-depth study has been conducted by Uaininn O'Meadhra and this has been supplemented in more recent works.² Conversely, most of the studies have been art historical in their approach, with a focus on the interrelationship between the carvings of the various art styles.³ There have been few attempts to examine the material from a cultural perspective through a socio-theoretical framework, where conceptualized learning, embodiment and the transfer of knowledge are key factors. By applying these concepts, combined with a more practical approach to craftsmanship – that is the physicality of the objects themselves – I shall discuss how the material reflects communicative behaviour on multiple levels.

ART AS A SOCIAL ACTION

Art is, above all, a human expression and is therefore not void or exempted from individuality or innovation. Because of this, it should be approached from diverse perspectives. Art and craftsmanship can be multi-dimensional, where semantic, aesthetic, affective and purposive dimensions all apply to the same object.⁴

The British social anthropologist Alfred Gell examines art as being a response to social interaction.⁵ He argues that art is a component of a technological system, which acts to express, change and evolve. His theory of excellence in art

1 P.T. Craddock, 'Metalworking techniques' in S. Youngs (ed.), *The work of angels: masterpieces of Celtic metalwork, 6th to 9th centuries AD* (London, 1989), pp 170–211; M.F. Hurley, 'Viking elements in Irish towns: Cork and Waterford' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), pp 154–62; K. Leahy, *Anglo-Saxon crafts* (Stroud, 2003), p. 58; A. MacGregor, 'Antler, bone and horn' in J. Blair and N. Ramsay (eds), *English medieval industries: craftsmen, techniques, products* (London, 1991), p. 370; U. Roth, 'Insulare Tierstile. Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Aspekte' in K.H. Nielsen (ed.), *Nordeuropæisk dyrestil 400–1100 e.Kr.* (Højberg, 2002), p. 237. 2 U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art: motif-pieces from Ireland* (Stockholm, 1979); U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art: motif-pieces from Ireland 2. A discussion* (Uppsala, 1987); U. O'Meadhra, 'Irish, Insular Saxon and Scandinavian elements in the motif-pieces from Ireland' in M. Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular art, AD500–1200* (Dublin, 1987), pp 159–65; U. O'Meadhra, 'Remarks on a sword pattern from late Viking Dublin and designer sketches in general' in G. Arwidsson (ed.), *Sources and resources: studies in honour of Birgit Arrhenius* (Sweden, 1993), pp 527–35; U. O'Meadhra, 'Motivstycken i Sverige – varför så få?' in A. Åkerlund et al. (eds), *Till Gunborg. Arkeologiska samtal* (Stockholm, 1997), pp 95–104. 3 E. Farnes, 'Some aspects of the relationship between late 11th- and 12th-century Irish art and the Scandinavian Urnes style' (MA, UCD, 1975). 4 H. Morphy and M. Perkins, 'The anthropology of art: a reflection on its history and contemporary practice' in H. Morphy and M. Perkins (eds), *The anthropology of art: a reader* (Oxford, 2006), p. 16. 5 A. Gell, 'The

is not embedded in aesthetics, but should rather be seen as a function or a certain trait of the art. An object of art is the only object that is *made beautiful* or is *beautifully made*. The power an aesthetically pleasing object possesses comes from the technological and cognitive processes by which it is shaped. Gell calls this 'the technology of enchantment'.⁶ It is through continuous social interaction with the surrounding environs that individuals are able to shape and be shaped by materiality. As such, production and the level of craftsmanship can be regarded as a dialectical relationship, where practical knowledge meets social awareness and collective demands. Technology and interaction enable a level of social becoming, where communication is the key to a constant adjustment.⁷ Further, it is the working and embedded knowledge behind the construction of artistic styles that control its depiction. The idea of specific traits or characteristics of an artistic style define it as belonging to a distinct group and each artistic style has its own rules. If unfamiliar with structural form, symmetry, rhythm or fluency of new styles, the craftsman will use his own embodied concepts and knowledge of style.

Following Gell's theory, art is neither neutral nor objective, since it is expressive in its depiction. It has the ability to change or become restructured through the hands of the artist, where the potential for innovation and individuality resides. It is precisely in the communication between master and pupil that change can occur.⁸ When knowledge is transmitted and reinterpreted to adjust to new contexts, it will evolve and display change. The transmission and the mechanisms behind it, however, can be quite difficult to study archaeologically, but key indicators such as continuity of craftsmanship and processes linked to workshops are strong indicators of an organized activity.⁹ One fundamental principle is that such a study requires a high enough quantity of typologically similar artefacts for it also to display contrasts and to speak of shared similarities. Location, context and spatial distribution are other key elements. As such, the Dublin assemblage of motif-pieces is a strikingly suitable example for such a study.

QUALITY AND STRUCTURE

In order to discuss motif-pieces as products of a communicative relationship, it is necessary to use some basic and reciprocal aspects regarding the quality of

technology of enchantment and the enchantment of technology' in J. Coote and A. Shelton (eds), *Anthropology, art and aesthetics* (Oxford, 1992), pp 40–63; A. Gell, *Art and agency: an anthropological theory* (New York, 1998). ⁶ Gell, 'Technology of enchantment', p. 44. ⁷ M.A Dobres, *Technology and social agency: outlining a practice framework for archaeology* (Oxford, 2000). ⁸ O.P. Gosselain, 'Exploring the dynamics of African pottery cultures' in R. Barndon et al. (eds), *The archaeology of regional technologies: case studies from the Palaeolithic to the age of Vikings* (New York, 2010), pp 193–224. ⁹ U. Pedersen, 'I smeltedigelen.

craftsmanship. Michael Neiss established certain quality criteria in his study of the stylistic composition on a group of Viking-Age brooches from Sweden.¹⁰ Some of these criteria are valuable with regard to the motif-pieces. These are *craftsmanship* and *iconographic relevance*.¹¹ The standard of craftsmanship is particularly relevant, since it involves assessing the degree of intensity in the work and the complexity of ornament.¹² It is precisely through the degree of compositional control and iconographic knowledge that a master of art can be recognized. Applying this concept to the motif-pieces enables a nuanced division and distinction between the various works of art and their carvers. Combined, this minimizes a subjective view and facilitates a more objective approach that is not founded in aesthetics, but rather in the purposive dimensions of the objects.

The manner in which the various artistic styles are expressed, whether Insular or Scandinavian in origin, has both common and distinct features. Whether it is the interplay of ribbons, animals or abstract renderings and metamorphosis, all artistic styles are embodied by structure, which in turn displays specific behaviour. By using the term 'behaviour', I am referring to the conduct of the art itself. The flow of ribbons, whether broken or continuous, in symmetrical or asymmetrical proportions, acts as a specific trait of the structure. Each artistic style has its own structure, which makes it recognizable as distinct. However, the common denominator between all styles is the interplay of *space* and depiction. The understanding and control of spatial relations between ornamental features, which are the symmetry of the design, are fundamental for the qualitative execution of the carved motif. This is vital with regard to the manipulation of art applied to various geometrical shapes. To be able to formulate distinct iconography within a specific geometrical shape requires a high level of knowledge on the artist's behalf and a degree of control between space and depiction. In addition to the quality criteria mentioned above, it is necessary to include spatial relations of the ornamental structure. When applied in combination, these criteria minimize the degree of subjectivity in the assessment of quality in art.

DUBLIN MOTIF-PIECES AND THEIR TRAITS

Since the initial excavations of Viking Dublin, approximately 250 motif-pieces have been discovered, of which only forty-two examples have been published in full. Despite these limitations, comparative analysis has revealed that most of the pieces have distinguishable traits and similarities, which enable the arrangement

Finsmedene i vikingtidsbyen Kaupang' (PhD, University of Oslo, 2010), p. 33. ¹⁰ M. Neiss, 'Några vikingtida praktsmyckens motivkanon. Kontinuitetsfrågor i germansk dyreornamentikk III' in *Viking 2006* (Oslo, 2006), pp 131–65. ¹¹ M. Neiss, 'A matter of standards: iconography as a quality indicator for Viking-Age brooches', *Lund Archaeological Review*, 15 (2009), 127–48. ¹² M. Neiss, 'Några vikingtida praktsmyckens motivkanon', p. 140.

of the material into different activity groups.¹³ The word ‘activity’ is used here to describe what has taken place and the type of carvings represented.

Activity Group 1: the working of geometrical ornamentation

Sub-group 1: simple interlace knots

Included here are Cat. 22, 43, 44, 47, 60 and 61.¹⁴ The motif-pieces share common features, in that they all have carvings of simple interlace knots and multiple triquetras in various degrees of completion.

Sub-group 2: various interlace border motifs

This consists of Cat. 28, 30, 49, 50, 58, 59 and 62.¹⁵ These motif-pieces suggest a focus on practising and working Insular interlace borders. Repetitive motifs of the same geometrical interlace occur on the same piece, as illustrated by Cat. 28¹⁶ and Cat. 50.¹⁷ Workings of different interlace motifs are found on Cat. 30¹⁸ and on a motif-piece from Christchurch Place (E122:16153).¹⁹

Sub-group 3: interlace border motifs occurring in combination with simple interlace knots (fig. 23.1)



23.1 A Dublin motif-piece in Group 1, Sub-group 3 (NMI, 1881:53), showing various carving attempts at interlace border motifs.

¹³ J.L. McGraw, ‘Kunst og kunsthåndverk Dublin 900–1200 e.Kr. Motivstykker som uttrykk for håndverkspraksis og kommunikasjon’ (MA, University of Oslo, 2012). ¹⁴ O’Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*. ¹⁵ Ibid. ¹⁶ Ibid., pls 9, 28a and b. ¹⁷ Ibid., pls 19, 50a and b. ¹⁸ Ibid., pls 9, 30a and b. ¹⁹ J.T. Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood: a study of its ornament and style* (Dublin, 1988), pp ix, 96 and fig. 123.



23.2 A Dublin motif-piece in Group 2 (NMI, E122:6567). Note the intricate working of animal motifs in addition to complex geometric motifs and simple interlace knots.
© NMI.

In this sub-group the activities display workings of both interlace and knot motifs on the same piece. Cat. 23, 33, 37, 39, 38, 51, 53, 54 and 57²⁰ show carvings in various degrees of completion. Included here is a piece from Wood Quay (E132:181)²¹ and one from Fishamble Street (E141:5222).²²

Activity Group 2: animal and geometrical motifs

This group consists of Cat. 26, 27, 32, 33, 35, 36, 55 and 63.²³ Included here are motif-pieces from Christchurch Place (E122:6567; fig. 23.²⁴ and E122:16246²⁵). These pieces contain carvings of animal motifs of both Viking and Insular tradition, which appear in conjunction with geometrical motifs. The pieces also display motifs in different stages of completion. Some motifs are only lightly outlined on the surface of the bone, while others are more deeply carved.

DISCUSSION

When observing the motif-pieces included in activity Group 1, it becomes clear that most of the geometrical ornamentation has been worked using guidelines for construction. On Cat. 43 and more notably Cat. 44, square and rectangular guidelines have been outlined prior to motif carving. Both these pieces display workings of simple interlace knots, some of which are unfinished, having empty rectangular outlined panels. Describing the knots as simple is not to suggest that the motifs were easy to work. To create even the simplest form of interlace, such as a two-ribbon knot, requires a high degree of rhythm, flow and an understanding of the underlying rules of symmetrical design.²⁶ By using the assessment criteria mentioned above, one could argue that the craftsman has operated within an understanding of *space*. By using the space allowed by the guidelines, he could learn the basic rules of interlace. Once he had mastered these, he could move forward to constructing two-, four- and six-ribbon plaits.

Sub-groups 2 and 3 suggest that the craftsmen were continuing to practise the newly mastered knowledge of how to form simple interlace knots, in addition to learning how to construct plaits of interlace. The interlaced knots are almost always of better quality than the plaitwork on the motif-pieces that also have carvings of interlace plaits. This suggests that these sub-groups are evidence of higher-skilled interlace workers. The carving attempts of varied quality and

20 O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*. 21 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp ix, 95 and fig. 119. 22 Ibid., pp ix, 95 and fig. 120. 23 O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*. 24 B. Ó Riordáin, 'The High Street excavations' in B. Almqvist and D. Greene (eds), *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15–21 August 1973* (Dublin, 1976), p. 145, pl. 5. 25 R. Johnson, 'On the dating of some early medieval Irish crosiers', *Medieval Archaeology*, 44 (2000), 143, fig. 27. 26 M. Budny, 'Deciphering the art of interlace' in C. Hourihane (ed.), *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the Early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), pp 183–204.

execution demonstrate the learning curves of the craftsmen. It also implies an awareness of the idealized form of interlace.

In relation to the activity groups mentioned above, it seems that there have been attempts at mastering and perfecting an art form. When the same motif is repeated multiple times on the same piece of bone, it speaks strongly of practice. It is also evidence of the craftsman practising and 'learning by doing'. By repeating the carving, sometimes even making the same mistakes, he is *embodying* the style.²⁷ That is to say, he is trying to master the structure of the particular style through his actions, while using the prerequisites for enabling not only the right actions, but also the wrong ones. By doing this repetitively, he is in the process of mastering the rules of a particular art form. Cat. 43 (E71:8152; fig. 23.3) and Cat. 44 (E71:8221; fig. 23.4) are good examples of this. Cat. 43 displays a total of forty-one attempts at carving the same oblong interlace motif.²⁸ The motifs have also been carved in rows along the rib-bone, as if the craftsman has used his latest attempt as a point of reference for the next. In contrast to this is Cat. 44, where only six attempts at a square interlace knot have been made, leaving nine empty panels.²⁹ In comparison, motif-pieces Cat. 22, 52 and 61 all display disarranged carvings of multiple attempts of triquetras and simple interlace knots, some of which are just lightly outlined and appear as unfinished.³⁰ From a qualitative perspective, one could suggest that Cat. 43 and 44 are examples of a craftsman attempting to understand the symmetrical rhythm of interlace, by controlling the space allowed by the guidelines. The corners of the rectangular and square panels provide fixed points for each of the four loops of the knot, which in turn control the symmetry of the knot itself.

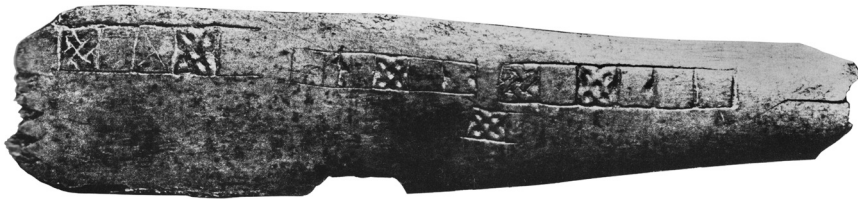
When examining the motif-pieces included in Sub-groups 2 and 3, it seems clear that the craftsman is trying to master the complex workings of interlace. Not only is he carving motifs of multiple-ribbon interlace, he is also trying to work out the interlace designs in circular, crescent- and triangular-shaped panels. In Cat. 50,³¹ Cat. 39³² and Cat. 30,³³ motifs of greater complexity and work intensity are being carved. Here, not only is the carver still practising the simple interlace knots, but also it appears that he is linking these together, to form borders of interlace. If one studies the interlace motifs on Cat. 37³⁴ more closely, it seems as if the craftsman has intentionally placed panels of interlace adjacent to and in close proximity to one another, as if to merge the isolated motifs into one continuous panel of interlace.

The motif-pieces included in activity Group 2 display other interesting traits: for example, the animal motifs are generally of better quality than the geometrical

27 R.G. Lesure, 'Linking theory and evidence in an archaeology of human agency: iconography, style and theories of embodiment', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 12:3 (2005), 237–55. 28 O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*, pls 15, 43a and b. 29 Ibid., pls 18, 44a and b. 30 Ibid., pls 7, 22a and b, 20, 24, 52a and b, 61a and b. 31 Ibid., pls 19, 50a and b. 32 Ibid., pls 14, 39a, b, c and d. 33 Ibid., pls 9, 30a and b. 34 Ibid., pls 14, 37a and b.



23.3 A Dublin motif-piece (NMI, E71:8152) showing repetitive carvings of the same interlace knot (after U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art: motif-pieces from Ireland* (Stockholm, 1979), p. 146, Cat. 43, pl. 205).



23.4 A Dublin motif-piece (NMI, E71:8221) showing repetitive linear carvings of the same interlace knot (after U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*, Cat. 44).

ornamentation. The composition and the interplay between animals and ribbons are more complex in structure. The interplay is also more symmetrical. However, the artistic renderings of the animal ornamentation display both Insular and Viking traits, even within the same motif. Both Cat. 26³⁵ and Cat. 32³⁶ contain animal motifs of the Ringerike style, but in this instance the animal shape seems subdued and to have taken on a more vegetative aspect. In this manner, the motif-pieces exhibit parallels with the woodcarvings from Viking Dublin. A distinctive variant of the Ringerike style appears on objects of woodworking that was identified by James Lang as belonging to the 'Dublin school'. He described the style as being more symmetrical in its geometry than the Scandinavian

35 Ibid., pls 8, 26a, b, c and d. 36 Ibid., p. 125, fig. 108.

variant, almost 'constrained by interlace' and based on 'Insular distinctiveness'.³⁷ This could indicate a development of nuanced artistic expressions taking place, which could have had its origin in experimental stages on motif-pieces. A detailed comparative study of context and stratigraphy between the motif-pieces and the wooden objects with similar stylistic carvings would be useful here. Such a study, however, exceeds the scope of this essay. It suffices to say that artistic expressions will transfer to other media, as long as the expressions are accepted and established in shape and in form within their context.

It should be stressed that a number of animal carvings on the motif-pieces share certain stylistic traits with the artwork on some of the high-quality Irish ecclesiastical metalwork of the period 800–1200. The stylistic relationship between several of the carvings on the motif-pieces and Irish Crucifixion plaques has previously been discussed by Ruth Johnson,³⁸ as well as parallels between Cat. 32 and Cat. 26, and the Cathach and the Misach reliquary shrines.³⁹ Furthermore, Johnson cited motif-pieces from Christchurch Place in arguing for a revised dating of three Irish croziers, namely the Kells crozier, St Dymphna's crozier and the Clonmacnoise crozier.⁴⁰ The importance of these similarities cannot be overstressed. It is, however, quite difficult to know whether the motif-pieces are evidence of copying or whether they were part of the artistic milieu behind the design of ecclesiastical artefacts. When viewed from a qualitative perspective, it is also quite difficult to know whether artistic styles initially evolved from simple to elaborate or whether the elaborate style established the foundation for the simplification of artistic expression.⁴¹ But shared similarities, regardless of which media they are expressed through, may emphasize the importance and longevity of specific stylistic traits. They certainly demonstrate an assimilation of diverse artistic milieux. In my opinion, this suggests that a connection was well established, but in what way was this manifested through the motif-pieces?

Tacit knowledge is defined as the sum of all experience and knowledge that is embodied by the artist and cannot be conveyed in verbal form. It is through actions of mirroring, imitating and mimicking the experienced that tacit knowledge is transferred. Active participation by the recipient is essential for this transfer to take place. Once the actions have taken place, the knowledge is transferred. This enables the artist to pass on the knowledge further. Such a chain reaction might result in alterations of form and structure. This could

37 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 20. 38 R. Johnson, 'Irish crucifixion plaques: Viking-Age or Romanesque?', *JRSAL*, 128 (1998), 95–116. 39 S.H. Fuglesang, 'Animal ornament: the late Viking period' in M. Müller-Wille and L.O. Larsson (eds), *Tiere, Menschen, Götter. Wikingerzeitliche kunststile und ihre neuzeitliche rezeption* (Hamburg, 2001), pp 157–94; J. Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts: a selected catalogue* (London, 1980), p. 136; P. Harbison, *The golden age of Irish art: the medieval achievement, 600–1200* (London, 1999), p. 264. 40 Johnson, 'Dating of some early medieval Irish croziers', 115–58. 41 Neiss, 'Några vikingtida praktsmäckens motivkanon', p. 132.

explain not only the strange mixture of Insular and Viking styles in the animal motifs from Dublin, but also the rigid and geometrical constraints of the Ringerike style, identified as the 'Dublin variant' by Lang.⁴² It suggests that a restructuring of traditional expressions was taking place there. The way in which it occurs could demonstrate the different prerequisites of craftsmen mirroring the actions of the artistically experienced (artists well versed in traditional expressions of the styles being worked). Learning attempts to master the 'art of an art form' are the very foundation for attempting the manipulation of one. The intricate working and learning of Insular interlace, through multiple attempts at understanding the rhythm and flow of ribbons, reflect 'learning by doing'. The repetitive behaviour displayed in the carvings speaks strongly of the embodiment of techniques via a highly organized practice. Understanding of the art's rhythm and flow in all its variable expressions was learnt through the action of trial and error. This is why the motifs vary to such a degree in quality. The animal carvings, however, display a high degree of innovation in composition and form. Not only do the animal motifs suggest a development of hybrids, they could also be evidence for cultural interaction. Perhaps this interaction sought to challenge the more conventional forms of Viking and Insular animal styles.

There are multiple factors to consider with regard to the art of the motif-pieces. When compared to earlier datable sites where a large number of motif-pieces have been found, Dublin stands apart, not only by sheer numbers and the urban context, but also by the homogenous behaviour they display. During the excavation of Gransha Mound in 1972, up to forty motif-pieces were discovered.⁴³ These consisted exclusively of shale and slate, and several displayed sketches of penannular brooches. At the monastic site of Nendrum, around twenty-four motif-pieces were found, also exclusively of slate.⁴⁴ These displayed similar carvings to the examples from Gransha Mound. At the well-known site of Lagore crannog, fourteen motif-pieces were found, of which only four are of animal bone.⁴⁵ All three sites display, in variable degrees, evidence of both ferrous and non-ferrous metalworking, in particular at Lagore.⁴⁶ Regarding an assessment of the quality of the artwork on the motif-pieces at these sites, it is the bone motif-pieces from Lagore that most strongly resemble the Dublin assemblage in terms of activity. For instance, Cat. 119⁴⁷ displays thirty-seven carvings, thirteen of which are various attempts at triquetra knots. The piece also bears carvings of eight interlace panels and three Insular animal motifs. The remaining thirteen carving attempts are unfinished. In addition, Cat. 123

⁴² Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, p. 20. ⁴³ C.J. Lynn, 'Excavations on a mound at Gransha, County Down, 1972 and 1982: an interim report', *UJA*, 3rd ser., 48 (1985), 81–90. ⁴⁴ E.M. Jope (ed.), *An archaeological survey of County Down* (Belfast, 1966). ⁴⁵ O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*, pp 88–95. ⁴⁶ M. Comber, 'Lagore crannog and non-ferrous metalworking in early historic Ireland', *JIA*, 8 (1997), 101–14. ⁴⁷ O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art*, p. 185, fig. 407.

displays workings of thirty-two isolated motifs, of which eight are triquetra motifs and ten are various interlace carvings.⁴⁸ The remaining fourteen motifs are lightly incised carving attempts, most of which are too unfinished to identify with confidence in terms of activity.

It is extremely difficult to evaluate whether the choice of raw material, being bone or stone, for the production and use of motif-pieces reflects different workshop practices or traditions. The comparison of these sites suggests that there were artists at work both at Lagore crannog and in Dublin, indicated by the repetitive carvings of art on individual motif-pieces. The motif-pieces from both these sites are comparable in that they display a variety of carvings. In addition, almost all of the motif-pieces from Dublin are of bone, in contrast to the material from Gransha Mound and Nendrum. It would be interesting to study the interrelationships of the motif-pieces from these four sites, but it seems reasonable to assume that they reflect diverse activities in terms of craftsmanship and perhaps in learning traditions, both spatially and through time.

CONCLUSION

Motif-pieces are evidence for the exchange of ideas and concepts of form. As such, they are also evidence of a technological process, which made a strong impact on the artistic milieu of Viking-Age Dublin. The homogenous nature and the similarities in character in the Dublin assemblage suggest that the carving of the motif-pieces was a highly organized activity there, in which there was a strong line of communication between artists familiar with different artistic expressions. Qualitative analysis implies that specific methods of learning, such as tacit artistic knowledge, were transferred through processes such as repetitiveness, mimicking and the embodiment of style. The motif-pieces display the dynamics of communication, where social interaction and mediation occurred on multiple levels. Not only did this communication affect the traditional stylistic traits, but it also affected and shaped new cognitive structures and concepts of form in art. Many of these failed to gain acceptance in established forms, which could explain why some of the strange zoomorphic carvings appear only on motif-pieces, without having parallels in other media.

A cultural region will exist only in so far as it is maintained by communication.⁴⁹ Specific artistic styles may have functioned to uphold, define and enhance various social relationships, in both a local and a regional perspective.⁵⁰ In this way, the workings on the motif-pieces can be seen as evidence of a

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 186, figs 412, 413. ⁴⁹ S. Sindbæk, 'Re-assembling regions: the social occasions of technological exchange in Viking-Age Scandinavia' in Barndon et al. (eds), *Archaeology of regional technologies*, p. 266. ⁵⁰ T. Earle, 'Style and iconography as legitimation in complex chiefdoms' in M.W. Conkey and C. Hastorf (eds), *The uses of style in archaeology* (Cambridge,

technological exchange where social interaction was key to maintaining communication, which is 'the theory of social becoming'.⁵¹ It is not coincidental that this material occurs in much larger quantities in the urban context of Viking-Age Dublin than at other sites. The degree of cross-cultural communication and the need for tools enabling it must have been essential to the functioning of a multicultural artistic milieu.

In conclusion, it seems that the right conditions for innovation and exchange through the means of tacit artistic knowledge were present to a high degree in Viking-Age Dublin. Thus, the motif-pieces are valuable sources for understanding the mechanisms behind learning processes. These processes speak of the integration of new art styles as well as of how an artisan interpreted a style in his own characteristic way, something that could account for the lack of adherence to strict stylistic norms. It seems reasonable to assume that there is a confluence of, not only artistic independence, but also of certain formalities surrounding learning traditions in Viking Dublin. Perhaps it is by the acceptance of certain motifs and working these designs through embodiment and by the exchange of tacit knowledge that learning traditions were upheld and passed on through generations. As such, the motif-pieces may reflect the making of a 'self identity', facilitating communication between multiple spheres and thereby reflecting a time of ambiguity and cultural awareness.⁵²

1990), pp 74–6. ⁵¹ Dobres, *Technology and social agency*, p. 133. ⁵² The author wishes to thank Ruth Johnson for the invitation and opportunity to contribute to this volume and for many stimulating and productive discussions. I should also like to thank my colleagues Rebecca J.S. Cannell, Mari Arentz Østmo, Bjarne Gaut and Grete Bukkemoen for their advice and feedback during the completion of this essay. Additionally, I should like to extend gratitude to my former supervisor Siv Elna Kristoffersen (Archaeological Museum of Stavanger) for all her support and encouragement during the completion of my MA thesis in 2010–12 at the Institute of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo, Norway.

The art of politics: the Cross of Cong and the Hiberno-Urnes style

GRIFFIN MURRAY

This essay examines the identity of the zoomorphic art style that was used in the decoration of the Cross of Cong and related works of twelfth-century Irish art. Previous scholarship is reviewed, before the components of the style are individually analysed. It is demonstrated that the style is a blending of Irish and Scandinavian art that may be labelled justifiably as ‘Hiberno-Urnes’. It was the royal patronage of Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair that saw this style reach prominence in Ireland on so many major pieces of religious art. This essay concludes that the adoption of the style for Ua Conchobair’s commissions is linked with his political manoeuvrings, particularly his relationship with Dublin, as well as his engagement with the church reform movement.

Despite the fact that the Vikings had a major impact on Ireland throughout the ninth and tenth centuries, the art styles that they brought with them from Scandinavia appear to have had little to no resonance with Irish craftsmen. It was apparently only in the later eleventh century, when Irish kings started to rule what had been up until then the independent Viking towns in Ireland, that Scandinavian styles began to have influence on Irish art more widely. For instance, the rule of Dublin by Diarmait mac Máel na mBó from 1052 and by Toirrdelbach Ua Briain from 1072¹ coincides with the manufacture of the shrine of the Cathach in Kells, Co. Meath (NMI, R2835), some time between 1062 and 1094 – a reliquary that displays strong influence from the Scandinavian Ringerike style.² Indeed, its ornament is most closely compared to a motif-piece from High Street in Dublin.³ It is apparently this political shift in Ireland that can be credited with the general acceptance of Scandinavian influence in the decoration of Ireland’s most sacred objects. There must have been many other consequences, too. Dublin in particular was a major centre of international trade and commerce that connected Ireland with the rest of Europe. As well as being a major source of artistic influence, Dublin seems to have been the main source

1 D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), pp 134, 138; M. Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru: Ireland’s greatest king?* (Stroud, 2007), pp 108–9. 2 R. Ó Floinn, ‘Sandhills, silver and shrines: fine metalwork of the medieval period from Donegal’ in W. Nolan, L. Ronayne and M. Dunlevy (eds), *Donegal: history and society* (Dublin, 1995), p. 120. 3 R. Ó Floinn, ‘Irish and Scandinavian art in the early medieval period’ in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), p. 92, figs 4–5.



24.1 Detail of the stave church at Urnes in Sogn, Norway (photograph by Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh).

of gold and silver during the period.⁴ Dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Ringerike and the subsequent Urnes style are apparently the only Scandinavian art styles that had any substantial influence outside the Hiberno-Scandinavian areas of influence in Ireland. Of principal concern here is the influence of the Urnes style in Ireland. Named after a decorated stave church at Urnes in Sogn, Norway (fig. 24.1), the style dates from the second half of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth century. It is a zoomorphic art style made of fantastic animals of three forms whose bodies and limbs consist of thick and thin bands that intertwine with one another, forming loops and figures-of-eight.⁵

It is the influence of the Urnes style on the decoration of the Cross of Cong (NMI, R2833), an early twelfth-century Irish reliquary of the True Cross, which is the subject of this essay (pls 22, 23). The cross was commissioned by the Connacht king, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair, in 1123 and was made in Roscommon by the craftsman Máel Ísu mac Bratáin Uí Echach. The cross bears an inscription on its sides, which has been transcribed (with abbreviations written out) and translated by Pádraig Ó Riain as follows:⁶

+ HÁC CRUCE CRÚX TEGITUR QUÁ PÁSUS CONDITOR ORBIS/
 OR[ÓIT] DO MUREDUCH U DUBTHAIG DO SENÓIR ÉREND/
 OR[ÓIT] DO THERRDEL[BUCH] U CHONCHO[BAIR] DO RÍG EREND LASA
 NDERRNAD IN GRES SA/
 OR[ÓIT] DO DOMNULL M[A]C FLANNACÁN U DUB[THAIG] DE IMLIB
 CONNACHT DO CHOMARBA CHOMMAN ACUS CHIARÁN ICA N[D]ERRNAD IN
 GRES SA/
 OR[ÓIT] DO MAÉL ÍSU M[A]C BRATDAN U ECHA[C]H (?) DORIGNI IN GRES SA/
 + HÁC CRUCE CRÚX TEGITUR QUÁ PASUS CONDITOR ORBIS

 + By this cross is covered the cross on which the creator of the world
 suffered/

4 G. Murray, 'The Cross of Cong and some aspects of goldsmithing in pre-Norman Ireland', *Historical Metallurgy*, 11:1 (2006), 56, table 3; W. O'Sullivan, 'The earliest Irish coinage', *JRSAI*, 79 (1949), 190–235; J.T. Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood: a study of its ornament and style* (Dublin, 1988). 5 For definitions and discussion of the Urnes style, the reader is referred to O.H. Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles: a study of western impulses in Nordic styles of the eleventh century', *Acta Archaeologica*, 26 (1955), 1–6; D.M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art* (London, 1966), ch. 7; S.H. Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style: a phase of eleventh century Scandinavian art* (Odense, 1980), pp 19–28; O. Owen, 'The strange beast that is the English Urnes style' in J. Graham-Campbell et al. (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw: select papers from the proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21–30 August 1997* (Oxford, 2001), pp 203–5. 6 P. Ó Riain and G. Murray, 'The Cross of Cong: some recent discoveries', *Archaeology Ireland*, 19:1 (2005), 18–21; Murray, 'Cross of Cong and some aspects of goldsmithing', 49–67.

A prayer for Muiredach Ua Dubthaig senior [ecclesiastic] of Ireland/
 A prayer for Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair king of Ireland by whom was
 made this ornament/
 A prayer for Domnall mac Flannacáin Uí Dubthaig from the borders of
 Connacht, successor of Commán and Ciarán by whom was made this
 ornament/
 A prayer for Máel Ísu mac Bratáin Uí Echach who made this ornament/
 + By this cross is covered the cross on which the creator of the world
 suffered

Many scholars writing about Viking art have considered the Cross of Cong, as well as other contemporary pieces of metalwork such as St Manchán's shrine from Lemanaghan, Co. Offaly (Boher, Co. Offaly) (pl. 24), the shrine of St Patrick's bell from Armagh (NMI, R4011), the arm-shrine of St Laichtín from Donoughmore, Co. Cork (NMI, 1884:690), and the plaque from Holycross, Co. Tipperary (NMI, P1031) (pl. 25), to be decorated with, or heavily influenced by, the Urnes style.⁷ Françoise Henry, on the other hand, while recognizing some Scandinavian influence on the Cross of Cong, argued that this was minimal and that the zoomorphic ornament was more indebted to Insular art styles.⁸ While the current state of opinion is that the Cross of Cong and related pieces of metalwork are decorated in a Hiberno-Urnes style, it has not been demonstrated through detailed analysis whether, in fact, this is the most suitable term for this zoomorphic ornament and what the balance between the Insular and the Scandinavian elements is. It is this question that will be addressed in this essay.

THE CROSS OF CONG AND THE URNES STYLE IN SCHOLARSHIP

Scandinavian influence on late eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish art is something that has been recognized by scholars for over a century. In 1909 Haakon Shetelig published a paper entitled 'Urnes-Gruppen', which was the first study of what was to become known as the Urnes style. Shetelig had been

⁷ For example, H. Shetelig, 'Urnesgruppen' in *Foreningen til norske fortidsmindeværkers bevaring: aarsberetningen* (Kristiania, 1909), p. 104; T.D. Kendrick, *Late Saxon and Viking art* (London, 1949), p. 114; Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', 13; M. de Paor and L. de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (London, 1964), p. 171; Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, p. 156; E. Farnes, 'Some aspects of the relationship between late eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish art and the Scandinavian Urnes style' (MA, UCD, 1975), pp 75–91; Fuglesang, *Aspects of the Ringerike style*, pp 54, 76; J. Graham-Campbell and D. Kidd, *The Vikings* (London, 1980), p. 175; Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 95. ⁸ F. Henry, 'The effects of the Viking invasions on Irish art' in B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples, c.800–1100AD* (Dublin, 1962; repr. 1975), p. 71; F. Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period (1020–1170AD)* (London, 1970), p. 192.

in contact with George Coffey of the National Museum of Ireland and discussed Irish material in his paper, which included the Cross of Cong, the Clonmacnoise crozier (NMI, R2988) and the shrine of St Patrick's bell.⁹ This was the first time that the Cross of Cong had been associated with Scandinavian art and the article was to have major influence on future scholarship. Coffey in his discussion of the Clonmacnoise crozier and the shrine of St Patrick's bell published in the same year also acknowledged Scandinavian artistic influence.¹⁰

In 1949 two important publications on Viking art included discussion of Irish material. One of these was another paper by Shetelig, entitled 'The Norse style of ornamentation in the Viking settlements'. In his discussion of the Urnes style, however, while he mentions the Clonmacnoise crozier, the shrine of St Patrick's bell, the arm-shrine of St Laichtín, the Holycross plaque and the Tongeren horn (*Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire*, 2958), he strangely makes no mention of the Cross of Cong.¹¹ Thomas D. Kendrick's book, *Late Saxon and Viking art*, is perhaps the more important, since he was the first to discuss an 'Irish Urnes' style and identified two forms, a 'Great Beast pattern and a Ringerike-pattern derivative'.

The first can be seen in a maturely accomplished form on the Cross of Cong and on the contemporary St Manchán's shrine, both products of the Connaught school of metalwork in the days of Turlough O'Connor. The main element in the design is a quadruped with a curly mane, the body heavily bordered and cross-hatched ... the Great Beast struggling with the serpent, which provides it with a background of open interlace.¹²

Kendrick goes on to compare the zoomorphic decoration on the Cross of Cong with that on the sarcophagus at Cashel, Co. Tipperary, and on the market cross at Tuam, Co. Galway (pl. 26). Kendrick's work is significant, because while he argued for Scandinavian stylistic influence in the case of the Cross of Cong and other works from the period, he acknowledged that there were Irish versions of this style. The inclusion of the Cross of Cong in an article on the Urnes style by Ole Henrik Moe seemed generally to confirm the belief that it displays influence from Scandinavian art, although he acknowledged its Irish characteristics even more so than Kendrick.¹³ The works of both Kendrick and Moe are notable for the fact that they visually analysed the zoomorphic ornament on the cross. Moe, however, was exceptional in proposing that the form of the Urnes style on the Cross of Cong may have had an influence on the style of some of the runestone

⁹ Shetelig, 'Urnesgruppen', pp 102–4. ¹⁰ G. Coffey, *Royal Irish Academy collection: guide to the Celtic antiquities of the Christian period preserved in the National Museum, Dublin* (Dublin, 1909), pp 49, 62. ¹¹ H. Shetelig, 'The Norse style of ornamentation in the Viking settlements', *Acta Archaeologica*, 19 (1949), 110–13. ¹² Kendrick, *Late Saxon and Viking art*, p. 114. ¹³ Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', 13–14, figs 13, 14a.

carvings in Scandinavia. This suggestion was later reinvestigated by Anne-Sofie Gräslund, who used comparisons with the zoomorphic ornament on the Cross of Cong and other pieces of contemporary Irish church metalwork to date a series of runestones in Uppland in Sweden.¹⁴

Máire de Paor and Liam de Paor were the first Irish scholars to acknowledge the influence of the Urnes style specifically on the Cross of Cong and were also the first to discuss it as part of a general archaeological overview of early medieval Ireland.¹⁵ They also considered the decoration on the cross to be 'Irish Urnes ornament' and their few comments on it are, like those of Kendrick and Moe, based on some visual analysis. Henry, however, in her article 'The effects of the Viking invasions on Irish art', was not so convinced of the Scandinavian influence on the cross as the de Paors were and commented: 'As in the case of the Cashel sarcophagus with which the cross has an obvious kinship, it is more a question of general feeling, of a certain flavour of a *goût scandinave*, than a definite similarity'.¹⁶

Henry was less reserved about the influence of Scandinavian art, and the Urnes style in particular, in her discussion of the Corpus Missal, a twelfth-century Irish illuminated manuscript in Corpus Christi College, Oxford (MS 282),¹⁷ while in her important book *Irish art in the Romanesque period* she again reiterated that the Scandinavian stylistic influence on the Cross of Cong and other contemporary pieces was minor.¹⁸ Although this book was first published in English in 1970, it was originally published in French in 1964.¹⁹

Henry's reluctance to accept Scandinavian stylistic influence on the Cross of Cong was not followed by other authors. Indeed, it was included, along with a number of other pieces of Irish church metalwork, in David Wilson's and Ole Klindt-Jensen's *Viking art*, which, although now somewhat outdated, remains the most important book on the subject.²⁰ Wilson considered the cross to be decorated in the 'Urnes style in an Irish idiom' and commented that aspects of its zoomorphic ornament are closely comparable to some of the ornament on the Urnes stave church in Norway. These comments stressed the Scandinavian stylistic influence on the cross and ensured that in the following decades it would be mentioned in most publications dealing with the subject of Viking art and the Urnes style.

In 1981 Roger Stalley published a paper on 'The Romanesque sculpture of Tuam' in which he discussed the market cross there and the animal ornament on it (pl. 26). While not the first scholar to compare the ornament on the market cross and the Cross of Cong, he was the first to elaborate on the subject, noting

¹⁴ A.-S. Gräslund, 'Runstenar – om ornamentik och datering', *TOR*, 23 (1991), 113–40.

¹⁵ De Paor and de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp 170–1, pls 68–9. ¹⁶ Henry, 'Effects of the Viking invasions', p. 71. ¹⁷ F. Henry and G.L. Marsh-Micheli, 'A century of Irish illumination (1070–1170)', *PRIA*, 62C (1962), 137–40. ¹⁸ Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, p. 192. ¹⁹ H. Richardson, 'Bibliography of Dr Françoise Henry', *Studies*, 64 (1975), 322. ²⁰ Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pp 156–7, pl. 26.

the differences and similarities of their animal ornament, as well as the fact that they were both commissioned by Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair.²¹ More importantly, however, Stalley examined the Scandinavian Urnes style against the Irish Urnes style and noted a number of points of similarity and points of difference between them.²² Indeed, his study of the style in Ireland, so far, has not been surpassed in the published literature. Stalley states:

One can conclude that the visual impression given by Irish Urnes ornament is often closely comparable to Scandinavia but the compositional methods are more systematic and symmetrical. Differences occur in the individual treatment of animals and it appears that Irish craftsmen remained loyal to many of their traditional methods. While the profound influence of Scandinavian Urnes ornament is undeniable, Irish versions of the style are far from mechanical reproductions. An almost equal blend of Irish and Scandinavian ingredients seems to be the hallmark of the market cross at Tuam.²³

ZOOMORPHIC ORNAMENT ON THE CROSS OF CONG

The Cross of Cong is predominantly decorated with zoomorphic ornament made up of intertwined animals of both thick and thin body width. The ornament occurs in panels of false openwork on the front of the cross and in panels of true openwork on the knop and socket. It also originally occurred on four large openwork plates on the back of the cross, three of which remain (pls 22, 23, 27). The animals are predominantly fantastic creatures, largely in profile, and nearly all of them have a backward-pointing almond-shaped eye and a tail that ends in a lobed terminal. Any lappets or offshoots also have lobed terminals. The snouts usually expand near their terminals and are ribbed, while they may also feature a short hanging drop. Where limbs occur, the knee joint is either represented by a bend in the leg or by an angular projection at the back of the leg and their paws have a rounded heel and a pointed claw. An exception to the above is a clearly defined bird, which occurs on one pair of panels on the right arm on the front of the cross. Excluding the latter, the zoomorphic decoration on the entire cross is made up of only three different types of animal. These are as follows:

²¹ R. Stalley, 'The Romanesque sculpture of Tuam' in R. Stalley (ed.), *Ireland and Europe in the Middle Ages: selected essays on architecture and sculpture* (London, 1981; repr. 1994), p. 134.

G. Petrie had also compared the Tuam market cross with the Cross of Cong (G. Petrie, 'The ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland, anterior to the Anglo-Norman invasion; comprising an essay on the origin and uses of the round towers of Ireland', *TRIA*, 20 (1845), 313).

²² Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', p. 135. ²³ *Ibid.*, pp 135–6.

Type 1 animals are quadrupeds that may have two, three or all of their legs depicted (pl. 28a). Their bodies are noticeably thicker than their limbs and the latter usually taper in width. They are always decorated with hatching and also, occasionally, with a row of lobes, with a row of short bands with lobed terminals, with double parallel lines that follow the body's contours, or with beading. The hips of these animals are marked with a spiral and they feature a thin tail. They usually have an ear depicted and their mouths are often shown open, while they may also feature a lappet springing from their heads or an offshoot from their bodies.

Type 2 animals are snake-like in appearance, although they usually have one leg or, very occasionally, two or three legs depicted (pl. 28b). Their bodies are almost never decorated and there is usually no noticeable difference between the thickness of their bodies and that of their limbs. Similarly, there is usually no distinction between their bodies and their tails, which often form a number of loops. Type 2 animals often feature an ear, their mouths are usually shown closed and, occasionally, their heads are shown in plan. They may feature offshoots from their bodies, but are less likely to have head lappets.

Type 3 animals have no limbs and are essentially snakes (pl. 28c). Their bodies are almost never decorated, their mouths are usually closed and they sometimes have ears. While they have no limbs, they may have an angular projection in the lower section of their bodies and they can, like the other animals, occasionally feature offshoots or head lappets. These animals are also often shown in plan as well as in profile and they always form loops with their bodies.

THE CROSS OF CONG AND THE URNES STYLE

In his analysis of the zoomorphic ornament on the stave church at Urnes (fig. 24.1), Moe identified three distinct animal types.²⁴ Moe's Type 1 is a dominant quadruped (Kendrick's Great Beast), his Type 2 is a snake-like animal with a single limb depicted and an expansion in its lower body and his Type 3 animal is a snake. This threefold division is considered by a number of authors to be a primary feature of the Urnes style.²⁵ A similar threefold division has been identified among the animals on the Cross of Cong, originally by Moe,²⁶ but in

²⁴ Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', 2. ²⁵ Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, p. 147; Farnes, 'Irish art and the Scandinavian Urnes style', pp 28–31; Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 19; S.H. Fuglesang, 'Stylistic groups in late Viking and early Romanesque art', *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia*, 1 (1981), 172–3; Owen, 'English Urnes style', p. 203. ²⁶ Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', 13.

detail here; they seem loosely to correspond to those of the Urnes style in Scandinavia.

Another feature that is considered by a number of authors to be a primary feature of the Urnes style is the dominance of figures-of-eight and loops in the ornament.²⁷ Indeed, while intertwined animals were a feature of Insular art in Ireland from the eighth century, the manner in which they are intertwined on the Cross of Cong, that is forming figures-of-eight and numerous loops, appears to have been a borrowing from the Scandinavian Urnes style, as previously noted by Stalley.²⁸ It is these two main features – the three types of animal and the fact that they form figures-of-eight and numerous loops – that strongly ties the zoomorphic ornament of the Cross of Cong with the Urnes style of Scandinavia and allows one to acknowledge the influence of the style on the cross. The same can be said for St Manchán's shrine, which is decorated in exactly the same style of ornament (pl. 29).

DISCUSSION

In the following discussion, however, select features of the zoomorphic decoration on the Cross of Cong will be dealt with from the point of comparison with contemporary Irish metalwork, other contemporary material, Scandinavian material and material from earlier centuries in Ireland. It will become apparent that many of the features of the zoomorphic ornament on the Cross of Cong are features of both Insular art in Ireland and of the Urnes style in Scandinavia.

Openwork zoomorphic ornament

As well as the ornament on the back of the Cross of Cong and on its knop, openwork zoomorphic ornament occurs on numerous contemporary examples of Irish church metalwork, as for example on St Manchán's shrine (pl. 24) and on the shrine of St Patrick's bell.²⁹ Indeed, there was a long tradition of this form of ornament in Ireland, for openwork zoomorphic ornament may be seen on the eighth-century book-shrine from Lough Kinale, Co. Longford,³⁰ on the eighth- or ninth-century cross from Tully Lough, Co. Roscommon,³¹ and on an eighth-century plaque from the Phoenix Park, Dublin.³² It may also be seen on

27 Ibid., 4; Farnes, 'Irish art and the Scandinavian Urnes style', p. 32; Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 21; Fuglesang, 'Stylistic groups in late Viking and early Romanesque art', 173, fig. 14; Owen, 'English Urnes style', p. 204. 28 Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', p. 135. 29 M. Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland: Irish art, 3000BC–1500AD* (Dublin, 1983), p. 63. 30 E.P. Kelly, 'The Lough Kinale book-shrine' in R.M. Spearman and J. Higgitt (eds), *The age of migrating ideas: early medieval art in northern Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh and Stroud, 1993), pp 168–74, figs 20.4, 20.5. 31 E.P. Kelly, 'The Tully Lough cross', *Archaeology Ireland*, 17:2 (2003), 9–10. 32 R. Ó Floinn, 'Openwork mount' in S. Youngs (ed.), *The work of angels: masterpieces of Celtic metalwork, 6th–9th centuries AD*

Hiberno-Scandinavian material, including a ninth-century brooch from Rathlin Island, Co. Antrim,³³ and a tenth-century brooch from High Street, Dublin.³⁴ Zoomorphic openwork ornament was also particularly common in Viking Scandinavia and may be seen to great effect on the Söderala vane from Sweden³⁵ and is a main feature of Urnes brooches.³⁶ Openwork was considered by Moe to be one of the major features of the Urnes style in Scandinavia.³⁷ While one might suggest that its presence on the Cross of Cong is a result of influence from the late Viking art style, it has been shown that there were precedents for openwork zoomorphic decoration in Ireland.

Symmetry

Symmetry was a feature of zoomorphic decoration in Ireland from around 700, as exemplified in the Book of Durrow (TCD, MS 57)³⁸ and on the 'Tara' brooch from Bettystown, Co. Meath (NMI, R4015).³⁹ Likewise, the zoomorphic ornament on the Cross of Cong is symmetrical. This can be seen in the case of the pairs of panels in false openwork on the front of the cross, but also on the large openwork plaques on the back (pls 22, 23). Indeed, symmetrical zoomorphic decoration is found on many of the major pieces of church metalwork from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries in Ireland, the shrine of St Patrick's bell being a particularly notable example, as well as being widely found on Irish twelfth-century stone sculpture such as on two of the high crosses from Tuam (pl. 26),⁴⁰ on the sarcophagus at Cashel⁴¹ and on a number of Hiberno-Romanesque churches.⁴²

On the other hand, one of the major characteristics of the Urnes style in Scandinavia is the fact that it is asymmetrical.⁴³ Signe Horn Fuglesang comments in relation to the sculpture at Urnes (fig. 24.1) that 'the loops exhibit slight shifts of direction which emphasize that the design is built not on axially, but on a subtle balance of the position and shape of the loops'.⁴⁴ Fuglesang,

(London, 1989), p. 150, cat. no. 145. 33 P.F. Wallace and R. Ó Floinn (eds), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland: Irish antiquities* (Dublin, 2002), p. 231, pl. 6:21. 34 National Museum of Ireland, *Viking and medieval Dublin: National Museum excavations, 1962-1973. Catalogue of exhibition* (Dublin, 1973), p. 23, cat. no. 6, pl. 7 top. 35 Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. 58a. 36 L.G. Bertelsen, 'Urnesfibler i Danmark' in *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (Copenhagen, 1992), pp 345-70; Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. 73f. 37 Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', 6. 38 B. Meehan, *The Book of Durrow: a medieval masterpiece at Trinity College Dublin* (Dublin, 1996), p. 64. 39 P. Harbison, *The golden age of Irish art: the medieval achievement, 600-1200* (London, 1999), pl. 41. 40 Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', pls 1, 5, 12, 16. 41 J. Bradley, 'The sarcophagus at Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, Co. Tipperary', *NMAJ*, 26 (1984), 14-35, figs 7, 8; Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, pl. 89. 42 For example, H.G. Leask, *Irish churches and monastic buildings, i: The first phases and the Romanesque* (Dundalk, 1955), fig. 56, pls 6a, 10, 14a. 43 Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, p. 150; Farnes, 'Irish art and the Scandinavian Urnes style', p. 35; Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 22; Owen, 'English Urnes style', p. 204. 44 Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 21.

Stalley and Ragnall Ó Floinn have independently also noted the difference between the symmetry of the zoomorphic ornament on the Cross of Cong and stylistically related material in Ireland and, largely, the asymmetry of Urnes style in Scandinavia.⁴⁵

Covering large surfaces

While the zoomorphic ornament on the front of the cross and on its knop and socket is contained within numerous panels, on the back it originally covered the arms and shaft with four large, openwork plaques (pls 23, 27). Good examples of the use of zoomorphic ornament in this manner, that is to cover large surfaces, may also be seen on St Manchán's shrine (pl. 24), the shrine of St Patrick's bell,⁴⁶ the arm-shrine of St Laichtín⁴⁷ and the Clonmacnoise crozier.⁴⁸ It may also be seen on the sarcophagus at Cashel, on the 'Doorty' cross at Kilfenora, Co. Clare,⁴⁹ on the 'market' cross at Glendalough⁵⁰ and in Tuam on the cross shaft in St Mary's Cathedral⁵¹ as well as the market cross (pl. 26).

The use of zoomorphic ornament to cover large surfaces is certainly a feature of late Viking art in Scandinavia and can be seen at Urnes itself (fig. 24.1). It does not, however, seem to have been a common feature of zoomorphic art before the late eleventh century in Ireland, where zoomorphic ornament usually occurred in numerous panels that divided up the surface of an object. Nevertheless, exceptions do occur, such as underneath the Ardagh chalice,⁵² the St Germain plaques,⁵³ the Donore handle,⁵⁴ and on the high cross at Bealin, Co. Westmeath.⁵⁵ Even so, there is no real comparison between these earlier pieces and the ornament on the back of the Cross of Cong and the other examples mentioned above, which must have been influenced by the freer zoomorphic ornament of late Viking art.

Contained in panels

Generally, panelled zoomorphic ornament is not a feature of late Viking art in Scandinavia.⁵⁶ Conversely, zoomorphic ornament contained within panels was a

⁴⁵ Fuglesang, 'Stylistic groups in late Viking and early Romanesque art', 113; Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', p. 135; Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 94. ⁴⁶ Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, p. 63. ⁴⁷ G. Murray, 'The arm-shaped reliquary of St Lachtin: technique, style and significance' in C. Hourihane (ed.), *Irish art historical studies in honour of Peter Harbison* (Dublin, 2004), pp 141–64, pls 1–3. ⁴⁸ Wallace and Ó Floinn (eds), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland*, pls 6:28, 6:31. ⁴⁹ R. Cronin, 'Late high crosses in Munster: tradition and novelty in twelfth-century Irish art' in M.A. Monk and J. Sheehan (eds), *Early medieval Munster: archaeology, history and society* (Cork, 1998), pp 138–46, fig. 14.2. ⁵⁰ R. Ó Floinn, 'The "market cross" at Glendalough' in C. Doherty et al. (eds), *Glendalough: city of God* (Dublin, 2011), pp 80–111, pls 5.2–5.4. ⁵¹ Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', pl. 5. ⁵² F. Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800AD)* (New York, 1965), pl. 33. ⁵³ Youngs, 'The work of angels', pl. 138. ⁵⁴ M. Ryan, 'The decoration of the Donore discs' in C. Bourke (ed.), *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain* (Belfast, 1995), pp 27–35. ⁵⁵ Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period*, pl. 88. ⁵⁶ See Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking*

dominant feature of Insular art in Ireland from at least the eighth century. It occurs on the front of the Cross of Cong (pl. 22) as well as on its knop and socket, and may also be seen on most of the major pieces of contemporary church metalwork. The Cross of Cong, St Manchán's shrine (pl. 24) and the shrine of St Patrick's bell have zoomorphic art both contained in panels and covering large surfaces. It is noteworthy that the zoomorphic ornament on these three reliquaries is contained in panels on their main faces, while it is used to cover large areas on their sides in the case of St Manchán's shrine and the shrine of St Patrick's bell, and on the back in the case of the Cross of Cong (pls 22, 23). This may suggest that more traditional decoration was required, or expected, for the front of these reliquaries, while newer forms could be used for the secondary faces.

Thick and thin bands

One of the most noticeable features of the zoomorphic ornament on the Cross of Cong is the thickness of the animals, which consists of distinguishable broad and narrow bands (pls 27, 28). The bodies of Type 1 and Type 2 animals consist of broad bands, while their limbs, tails and lappets, and the bodies of Type 3 animals consist of narrow bands. As a result, in each area of zoomorphic ornament the broader bands stand out as the main components of the design, while the narrow bands intertwine with them. While the use of two distinguishable widths of band is regarded as one of the main features of the Urnes style,⁵⁷ it was a common feature of Insular art from the eighth century onwards.

The decoration of the bodies of the animals

Niamh Whitfield has explored aspects of the ancestry of Irish zoomorphic decoration, proving that many of the formal conventions of representation that are found in Ireland in the early medieval period derived from Anglo-Saxon decoration and, ultimately, from Germanic and late Antique sources.⁵⁸ The hatching/row of lobes decoration seen on the bodies of the animals on the Cross of Cong (pls 27, 28), St Manchán's shrine (pl. 29) and on some other contemporary examples of Irish church metalwork has such an origin and may be seen in the eighth century in Ireland as, for instance, on the 'Tara' brooch⁵⁹ and on the mount from the Phoenix Park, Dublin.⁶⁰ It is also seen later in the tenth century on bossed-penannular brooches as, for example, on that from Ballyspellan, Co.

art; Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*; Fuglesang, 'Stylistic groups in late Viking and early Romanesque art'. Panelling does occur, however, owing to the nature of the material in the case of the Cammin and Bamberg caskets. 57 Moe, 'Urnes and the British Isles', 6; Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*, p. 20; Owen, 'English Urnes style', p. 204. 58 N. Whitfield, 'Formal conventions in the depiction of animals on Celtic metalwork' in Bourke (ed.), *From the isles of the north*, pp 89–104. 59 Ibid., pp 95, 98–101, fig. 14a. 60 R. Ó Floinn, 'Openwork mount' in Youngs (ed.), *The work of angels*, p. 150, cat. no. 145.

Kilkenny, and in the early eleventh century on the Evangelist symbols on the Soiscéal Molaise book-shrine from Devenish, Co. Fermanagh.⁶¹

While what Whitfield terms 'right-angled' hatching (that is, where the hatching is not diagonally aligned along the body, which is the common practice, but at a right-angle to the outline of the body) is rare in Ireland in the early medieval period,⁶² it does occur in a few instances in the early twelfth century. It may be seen on many of the animals on the openwork plaques on the knop of the Cross of Cong as well as on the bodies of the quadrupeds on the ivory crozier from Aghadoe, Co. Kerry (Staten Historiska Museum, 16845).⁶³

The occurrence of right-angled hatching in this period is probably the result of Scandinavian influence rather than influence from Insular art. It is found on the animal ornament on a tenth-century disc brooch from High Street, Dublin, in the Borre/Jellinge style⁶⁴ and on a seemingly tenth-century, copper-alloy object from Inchbofin, Co. Westmeath, which Liam de Paor considered to be 'in the style which in Ireland corresponds to the Jellinge style of Scandinavia'.⁶⁵ Furthermore, it may be seen on a motif-piece from Shandon, Co. Waterford, which has been dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century and is also said to display aspects of the Jellinge style⁶⁶ and occurs on the body of one of the animals on the tenth-century portion of the British Museum crozier.⁶⁷ Indeed, while it may be seen on animals in the Jellinge style from Scandinavia as, for instance, on an oval brooch from Morberg, Norway,⁶⁸ it is also used to decorate the bodies of the animals in the Urnes style as, for example, on a brooch from Tåndgarve, Sweden,⁶⁹ and on the hilt of a sword found at Suontaka, Finland.⁷⁰

Almond-shaped eyes

Backward-pointing almond-shaped eyes occur on every animal seen in profile on the Cross of Cong (pls 27, 28), with the exception of a single example that is forward pointing, which is located on the openwork plate on the upper section of the back of the cross. Identical eyes occur on the animals on St Manchán's shrine (pl. 29) and on the plaque from Holycross, Co. Tipperary

61 Wallace and Ó Floinn (eds), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland*, pls 6:10, 6:27; P. Mullarkey, 'Some observations on the form and date of the Soiscéal Molaise book shrine' in Hourihane (ed.), *Irish art historical studies*, pp 124–40, pl. 9. 62 Whitfield, 'Formal conventions', p. 98. 63 G. Murray, 'The Aghadoe and River Laune crosiers' in G. Murray (ed.), *Medieval treasures of County Kerry* (Tralee, 2010), pp 45–60, figs 9–11. 64 National Museum of Ireland, *Viking and medieval Dublin*, p. 23, cat. no. 6, pl. 7; R. Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 2004), p. 85. 65 L. de Paor, 'Antiquities of the Viking period from Inchbofin, Co. Westmeath', *JRSAI*, 92 (1962), 189; pl. 18; fig. 2. 66 U. O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque art motif-pieces from Ireland: an illustrated and descriptive catalogue of the so-called artists' 'trial-pieces' from c. fifth–twelfth centuries AD, found in Ireland, c.1830–1973* (Stockholm, 1979), pp 24, 68–9, cat. no. 64, pls 25–6; N. O'Connor, 'Bone trial piece' in Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, p. 152, cat. no. 71; Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 95, fig. 9. 67 M. MacDermott, 'The Kells crosier', *Archaeologia*, 96 (1955), fig. 9:2. 68 Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. XXXIVd. 69 Ibid., pl. LXXIIIa. 70 J. Graham-Campbell, *Viking artefacts: a select catalogue* (London, 1980), p. 71, cat. no. 251.

(pl. 25).⁷¹ Backward-pointing almond-shaped eyes were a feature of animal decoration in early medieval Ireland from around 700, as may be seen in the Book of Durrow.⁷² The feature occurs on animals in numerous Insular manuscripts, including the late eighth- or early ninth-century Book of Kells.⁷³ It may also be seen on eighth- and ninth-century metalwork, for instance, on the 'Tara' brooch⁷⁴ and on the Derrynaflan paten and chalice.⁷⁵ It would seem that the style of the eyes on the animals seen in profile on the Cross of Cong and on the other pieces of metalwork closely related to it was influenced by a long tradition of animal decoration in Ireland.

In contrast, forward-pointing almond-shaped eyes, one example of which occurs on the Cross of Cong, may be seen on the shrine of the Cathach, on the Clonmacnoise crozier,⁷⁶ on the Tongeren horn⁷⁷ and on the animal heads at the terminals of the crest on the shrine of St Patrick's bell.⁷⁸ The occurrence of forward-pointing almond-shaped eyes seems to have been a result of influence from Scandinavia, since these are commonplace in late Viking art⁷⁹ and seem to occur first in Ireland on decorated wood from Dublin in the late tenth or early eleventh century.⁸⁰

Spiral hips

Spiral or curled hips are a feature of the animals on the Cross of Cong (pl. 27), as well as those on St Manchán's shrine (pl. 29), the shrine of the Book of Dimma from Roscrea, Co. Tipperary (TCD, MS 59*)⁸¹ and on the Holycross plaque (pl. 25). Curled hips occur on animals on many other pieces of church metalwork from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries and a spiral hip may also be seen on the animal on the ivory crozier head from Aghadoe.⁸² While not unknown, spiral or curled hips are less often a feature of animals in illuminated manuscripts.⁸³ They were, however, a continuous feature of zoomorphic ornament on Irish metalwork from the eighth to the twelfth century and may be seen, for example, on animals on the 'Tara' brooch,⁸⁴ on the Lough Kinale book-shrine⁸⁵ and on the Antrim cross.⁸⁶

71 Ibid., p. 149, cat. no. 505. 72 Meehan, *Book of Durrow*, p. 64. 73 For example, F. Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions (800–1020 AD)* (New York, 1967), pls 17, 32. 74 For example, Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period*, pl. 41; Whitfield, 'Formal conventions', figs 13a, 14a. 75 M. Ryan (ed.), *The Derrynaflan hoard, I: a preliminary account* (Dublin, 1983), pls 9–12, 44. 76 Wallace and Ó Floinn (eds), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland*, pls 6:28, 31. 77 M. Ryan, 'The Irish horn-reliquary of Tongres/Tongeren, Belgium' in G. Mac Niocaill and P.F. Wallace (eds), *Keimelia: studies in medieval archaeology and history in memory of Tom Delaney* (Galway, 1988), pp 127–42, pls 9, 12, 15, 16, 18. 78 Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, p. 63. 79 For example, Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pls LIV, LV, LVIII, LIX, LXIX, LXXI–LXXIII. 80 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 53–4, 62–4, cat. nos DW12, 33–6, table 4. 81 R. Ó Floinn, 'The shrine of the Book of Dimma', *Eile*, 1 (1982), 25–39, pl. 2. 82 Murray, 'Aghadoe and River Laune crosiers', fig. 9. 83 See Meehan, *Book of Durrow*, p. 56. 84 Harbison, *Golden age of Irish art*, pls 39, 41. 85 Kelly, 'Lough Kinale book-shrine', figs 20.4, 20.5. 86 P. Harbison, 'The Antrim cross in the Hunt

Spiral hips were also commonly used on animals in Viking art and may be seen, for instance, on the mounts from Borre, on the Jelling stone, on the Mammen axe, on the Bamberg casket⁸⁷ and on the animals on the Urnes church (fig. 24.1). Furthermore, they may be seen on the animals on the stone from St Paul's churchyard, London, which Fuglesang considers to be in the 'pure Ringerike style',⁸⁸ and on a brooch from Pitney, Somerset, which was regarded by Olwyn Owen as being 'more closely related to the Scandinavian style than most English material'.⁸⁹ In terms of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin, spiral hips occur on the animals on a number of motif-pieces⁹⁰ as well as on pieces of carved wood.⁹¹

Lobed terminals

Most of the terminals of the animals on the Cross of Cong, be they tails or off-shoots, end in lobes. These terminals may also be seen on the animals, vegetal decoration and plain interlace on most of the contemporary pieces of church metalwork. Indeed, lobed terminals seem to have been the commonest form of terminal in use in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries and they are a feature of the animals in nearly all of the Irish manuscripts dating from that time.⁹² They also occur in stone sculpture, for example, on the animals on the Tuam market cross⁹³ and on the 'market' cross at Glendalough.⁹⁴

Lobed terminals are a feature of animals on eighth-century Irish material, such as the Donore handle⁹⁵ and the Book of Mulling,⁹⁶ and may also be seen in the late eighth- or early ninth-century Book of Kells,⁹⁷ on the tenth-century section of the British Museum crozier⁹⁸ and on the early eleventh-century Soiscéal Molaise.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, lobed terminals are a very common feature of animals in the late Viking art styles in both Scandinavia and England.¹⁰⁰ In this regard, it is perhaps worth noting that they occur on hair, moustaches and vegetal tendrils on numerous pieces of carved wood¹⁰¹ as well as on a number of animals on motif-pieces¹⁰² from Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin.

Museum', *NMAJ*, 20 (1978), fig. 4f–g, pl. XII. 87 Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pls XXVII, XLIX, LII–LIV. 88 Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*, pp 63–4, 189, cat. no. 88, pl. 53. 89 Owen, 'English Urnes style', p. 217. 90 O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces from Ireland*, cat. nos 27, 32, 55; fig. 129; pls 8, 21, 22. 91 Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, cat. nos DW 27, 31, 90; figs 32, 54; pl. VIII. 92 See Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 'Century of Irish illumination'. 93 Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', pl. 12a–c. 94 Ó Floinn, 'The "market cross" at Glendalough', pls 5.6, 5.8. 95 Ryan, 'Decoration of the Donore discs', fig. 5. 96 C. Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon painting: book illumination in the British Isles, 600–800* (New York, 1977), pl. 48. 97 Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions*, pls A, C–F. 98 MacDermott, 'Kells crozier', figs 9, 11, 13. 99 Mullarkey, 'Soiscéal Molaise book shrine', pl. 3. 100 See Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*; Fuglesang, *Some aspects of the Ringerike style*; Owen, 'English Urnes style'. 101 See Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*. 102 O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces from Ireland*, cat. nos 26, 32, 35, 55; pls 8, 9, 12, 21–2.

Angular projections

All of the animals on the Cross of Cong have the knee-joint on their legs represented, whether it is by a bend in the leg or by an angular projection at the back of the leg. Type 3 animals, which are limbless, also feature an angular projection towards the rear of their bodies (pl. 28c). These angular projections may also be seen on the animals on St Manchán's shrine (pl. 29) and on the Holycross plaque (pl. 25). It is, however, a feature of the snakes on the cross from Cloyne, Co. Cork,¹⁰³ and it occurs on some, but not all, of the animals on the arm-shrine of St Laichtín¹⁰⁴ and on the Lismore crozier,¹⁰⁵ while it may be seen in only two instances on the shrine of St Patrick's bell.¹⁰⁶ It may also be noted that it occurs on some of the animals on the market cross at Tuam.¹⁰⁷

In terms of the manuscripts of the period, the same feature occurs on the quadrupeds, but not on the snakes, in the Corpus Missal.¹⁰⁸ It may also be seen in the chronicle of Marianus of Mainz (Vatican Library, MS Pal. lat. 830),¹⁰⁹ in the second part of Rawlinson MS B502 (Bodleian Library, Oxford)¹¹⁰ and in the Corpus Gospels (Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 122).¹¹¹ These manuscripts range in date from around 1072 (chronicle of Marianus of Mainz) to about the 1140s (Corpus Gospels).¹¹² Nevertheless, the feature may also be seen on animals in older Insular manuscripts such as the Book of Armagh (TCD, MS 52), the Book of Durrow, the St Gall Gospels (St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, cod. 51) and the Book of Kells.¹¹³

In Scandinavia, an angular projection occurs on animals in late Viking art as, for instance on the Mammen axe,¹¹⁴ and is often, but not always, a feature of the animals on Urnes-style pieces.¹¹⁵ While it does occur on the church at Urnes, it is sometimes more of a swelling than a sharp projection (fig. 24.1). This feature occurs on some Urnes brooches¹¹⁶ and may also be seen on Urnes-style material in England such as the Durham crozier head, a book-clasp of unknown

103 R. Ó Floinn, 'Bronze cross' in Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, pp 171–2, cat. no. 82.
 104 Murray, 'Arm-shaped reliquary of St Lachtin', pls 1–3, 6. 105 Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, pl. 26. 106 Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, p. 63. 107 Stalley, 'Romanesque sculpture of Tuam', pl. 4. 108 Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 'Century of Irish illumination', pls XVII–XX; Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, pls J, 4, 5. 109 Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 'Century of Irish illumination', pl. VIa; Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, pl. 9. 110 Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 'Century of Irish illumination', pls XIIIa–b, XVI; Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, pl. 12. 111 Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 'Century of Irish illumination', pls XXXI–XXXII. 112 Ibid.; Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, pl. C. 113 See Whitfield, 'Formal conventions', fig. 16. 114 Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, pl. LII. 115 See A.-S. Gräslund, 'Rune stones: on ornamentation and chronology' in B. Ambrosiani and H. Clarke (eds), *Developments around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age* (Stockholm, 1994), pp 117–31, figs 21, 22; A.-S. Gräslund, 'Runstenar – om ornamentik och datering II', *TOR*, 24 (1992), 177–201, figs 4–6; A.-S. Gräslund, 'Runstenar – om ornamentik och datering', 113–40, figs 2, 7–10, 17; Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *Viking art*, frontispiece, pl. LXXII. 116 A.B. Lønborg, 'Masseproduktion af Urnesfibler!' in *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (Copenhagen, 1992), pp 371–8, fig. 1.

provenance and an openwork mount from Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.¹¹⁷ While angular projections seem to be a feature of Insular and late Viking ornament, the occurrence of angular projections on the bodies of snakes or, in the case of the Cross of Cong, Type 3 animals in Ireland was apparently a result of influence, either directly or indirectly, from the Urnes style in Scandinavia.

Summary

Influence from the Urnes style on the Cross of Cong is undeniable and it seems certain that the three animal types that form figures-of-eight and loops were borrowed from it. The propensity to cover large surfaces with animal ornament in this period seems to have been borrowed from late Viking art, as was the occurrence of right-angled hatching on the bodies of the animals that decorated the panels on the knop of the cross. Conversely, a number of features of the zoomorphic ornament on the cross – the symmetry, panelling, diagonal hatching on the bodies and the form of the eyes – seem to have been inherited from Insular art in Ireland. In addition, for instance, the feet on the animals on the Cross of Cong and related pieces are nearly identical to those found on the eighth-century handle from Donore.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, there are a number of features on the Cross of Cong that are common to both Insular and late Viking art, such as the use of openwork, broad and narrow bands, spiral or curled hips, lobed terminals and angular projections. In these cases, it is very difficult to know whether the craftsman was being inspired by traditional metalwork in Ireland or by the Scandinavian styles. That Urnes elements can be identified on contemporary Irish metalwork, as well as in stone sculpture and manuscript illumination, proves that aspects of it were popularly embraced by Irish craftsmen in this period, no doubt helped by its similarity to Insular zoomorphic ornament. The fact that major elements, as well as details, of the zoomorphic ornament on the Cross of Cong can be identified as being both inherited from Insular art in Ireland and borrowed from the Urnes style suggests that it is suitable to label this style Hiberno-Urnes or Irish-Urnes.

TOIRRDELBACH UA CONCHOBAIR AND DUBLIN

At the time when the Cross of Cong was made in 1123, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair controlled most of Ireland, including Connacht, Bréifne, Mide, Leinster, Dublin and Munster. Indeed, he is referred to in the inscription on the Cross of Cong as the king of Ireland (RÍG EREND), although such a claim remains open to question given that he had not subdued the entire country.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, he was without doubt the most powerful king in Ireland. It is his

¹¹⁷ Owen, 'English Urnes style', figs 11.1, 11.4d, 11.6c. ¹¹⁸ Ryan, 'Decoration of the Donore discs', fig. 5. ¹¹⁹ Ó Riain and Murray, 'Cross of Cong'.

control of Dublin, however, that is of interest here since it is likely that it was this Hiberno-Scandinavian town that provided the conduit by which elements of the Scandinavian Urnes style reached Connacht. The small number of archaeological objects decorated in the Urnes or Hiberno-Urnes style recovered from Dublin should not be a stumbling block for this argument, since that is a matter of preservation.¹²⁰

In 1118 Ua Conchobair led an army to Dublin and expelled Domnall Ua Briain from the kingship, replacing him with Énna Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, and taking away hostages.¹²¹ The following year, the year of Muirchertach Ua Briain's death, Toirrdelbach sailed down the Shannon with the forces of Leinster, Dublin and Ossory as far as Killaloe and stayed there 'for some time' consuming the crops of Munster.¹²² In 1122 Ua Conchobair had to reassert his power over Mac Murchada¹²³ and a few years later to reinstate him as king of Dublin.¹²⁴ When Mac Murchada died in 1126, Ua Conchobair installed his own son, Conchobar, as king of Leinster and Dublin.¹²⁵ This move was unsuccessful, however, for Conchobar was driven out in the following year¹²⁶ and Ua Conchobair then replaced him with Domnall Mac Fáeláin.¹²⁷ All of this activity around the time of the manufacture of the Cross of Cong demonstrates that Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair had a keen interest in controlling Dublin politically and militarily. He also appears to have taken a particular interest in Dublin's ecclesiastical affairs.

In 1121 Gréne was consecrated as bishop of Dublin by Ralph, the archbishop of Canterbury, by request. A text addressed to Archbishop Ralph by Henry I of England shows that the Dubliners who had recourse to Canterbury were supported in their request by the 'king of Ireland' (*rex Hiberniae*).¹²⁸ Most scholars agree that the king of Ireland in this instance was Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair.¹²⁹ While a bishopric was not given to Dublin at the synod of Ráith

¹²⁰ Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood*, pp 27–8, 47, 67; cat. nos DW49, 50; fig. 43, pl. XIV; O'Meadhra, *Motif-pieces from Ireland*, p. 163; Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 95. An Urnes brooch, now in the NMI, may also have come from Dublin (Johnson, *Viking-Age Dublin*, p. 44). Indeed, so far only a small amount of Urnes material has been recovered from any of the Hiberno-Scandinavian towns, which cannot be a reflection of the twelfth-century reality. ¹²¹ *AU*, *CS*, *ALC*, *AFM*, s.a. 1118; *AMisc.*, s.a. 1119; *AT*, p. 343. ¹²² *AFM*, s.a. 1119; *AT*, p. 344. ¹²³ *AU*, *ALC*, *AFM*, s.a. 1122; *AMisc.*, s.a. 1123. ¹²⁴ *AMisc.*, s.a. 1125; *AT*, p. 351. ¹²⁵ *AU*, *CS*, *ALC*, *AFM*, s.a. 1126; *AT*, pp 352–3. ¹²⁶ *AU*, *ALC*, s.a. 1127; *AMisc.*, s.a. 1126. ¹²⁷ *AU*, *ALC*, s.a. 1127. ¹²⁸ M.T. Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship: interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), p. 30, n. 67; C. Etchingham, 'Episcopal hierarchy in Connacht and Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair', *JGAHS*, 52 (2000), 26. ¹²⁹ M.V. Ronan, 'St Patrick's staff and Christ Church', *Dublin Historical Record*, 5 (1943), 124; Etchingham, 'Episcopal hierarchy in Connacht', 26; M. Holland, 'Dublin and the reform of the Irish church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 149; M. Brett, 'Canterbury's perspective on church reform and Ireland, 1070–1115' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the twelfth century: reform and renewal* (Dublin, 2006), p. 23.

Bressail in 1111, Glendalough receiving precedence, a bishopric had probably existed there since not long after 1028.¹³⁰ After Dublin's first historically known Hiberno-Scandinavian bishop, Dúnán, died in 1074, his successor Patrick was consecrated at Canterbury by Archbishop Lanfranc. This is the first known involvement of Canterbury in Irish church affairs. Lanfranc also consecrated Patrick's successor, Donnngus Ua hAingliu, a former monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, again at Canterbury in 1085.¹³¹ In 1096 Lanfranc's successor, Anselm, consecrated the next bishop of Dublin, Samuel Ua hAingliu, who was a former monk of St Albans, and in the same year he consecrated Máel Ísu Ua hAinmere, who had been a monk of Winchester, as the first bishop of the diocese of Waterford.¹³² For various reasons outlined by Martin Brett, consecration 'at Canterbury or by the archbishop was impossible for most of the period 1097–1120, even if it were otherwise desirable'.¹³³ As Marie Therese Flanagan has noted, all of the Irish episcopal appointments made by Canterbury up to then appear to have been approved by either Toirrdelbach or Muirchertach Ua Briain 'as claimants to the high-kingship and overlords of Dublin and Waterford'.¹³⁴ Thus, if Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair supported the consecration of Gréne as bishop of Dublin by Archbishop Ralph in 1121, after a lapse of Canterbury involvement in Irish affairs for over twenty years, he was following a tradition established by his predecessors.

Dublin appears to have been split on the issue in 1121, as Ceallach, the archbishop of Armagh, had claimed authority over Dublin 'by the choice of the foreigners and Irish'¹³⁵ and initially Gréne had to retire to Canterbury for some time before returning to his see.¹³⁶ In a letter written from Dublin to the archbishop of Canterbury, he was told that 'the bishops of Ireland are very jealous of us and especially that bishop who lives in Armagh, because we are unwilling to be subject to their rule, but wish always to be under your authority'.¹³⁷ Indeed, as Flanagan has commented, 'request to Canterbury for the consecration of Gréne in 1121 ... highlighted the fact that resort could be made to Canterbury as an alternative source for episcopal consecration by rival factions within the Irish church'.¹³⁸

¹³⁰ A. Gwynn, *The Irish church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, ed. G. O'Brien (Dublin, 1992), p. 64. On the reasons for the precedence of Glendalough at Ráith Bressail, see T. Ó Carragáin, *Churches in early medieval Ireland: architecture, ritual and memory* (New Haven and London, 2010), pp 246–8. ¹³¹ Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 19. ¹³² Ibid., p. 20. ¹³³ Brett, 'Canterbury's perspective on church reform', p. 24. ¹³⁴ Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 21. ¹³⁵ *AU, AFM*, s.a. 1121. ¹³⁶ Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, pp 30–1; Brett, 'Canterbury's perspective on church reform', p. 25. ¹³⁷ J. Watt, *The church in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1972), p. 14. ¹³⁸ Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 31. After the consecration of Gréne of Dublin by Archbishop Ralph, the only other bishop to be consecrated at Canterbury was Patrick of Limerick by Archbishop Theobald in 1140, but he seems never to have been recognized in Ireland.

By supporting Gréne, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair was going against the wishes of Armagh and its primate, Ceallach. At the synod of Ráith Bressail in 1111, Connacht had been placed under the authority of Armagh; Ceallach had visited Connacht in 1108¹³⁹ and again in 1116,¹⁴⁰ receiving his full tribute there. Nevertheless, Ua Conchobair probably wanted to support Dublin's claim of autonomy from Armagh, since he was also looking for ecclesiastical autonomy for Connacht. Indeed, Muiredach Ua Dubthaig, who is the principal person named in the inscription on the Cross of Cong, is described as the archbishop of Connacht in the annals from 1133–4¹⁴¹ until his death in 1150.¹⁴² The outcome of these political manoeuvrings was successful for at the synod of Kells in 1152 both Dublin and Tuam were officially recognized as archdiocesan capitals.¹⁴³

There may also be archaeological evidence of Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair's interest in the Dublin diocese. On the basis of style and technique, there are a number of religious objects that can be attributed to the workshop, and even to the craftsman, that produced the Cross of Cong. While they are spread throughout the country, all occur in areas that were either under Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair's direct control or in the lands of his allies. Indeed, it appears that one of the rewards for allegiance to Ua Conchobair was patronage of one's churches by the Connacht king, good examples of which are the Aghadoe crozier¹⁴⁴ and the Holycross plaque (pl. 25), the latter having probably been originally made for Cashel. St Manchán's shrine from Lemanaghan, Co. Offaly, was certainly also made by Máel Ísu, the master craftsman responsible for the Cross of Cong (pls 24, 29). It is likely that St Manchán's shrine was not unique in twelfth-century Ireland. Two figures very similar to those surviving on the shrine, but which are too large to have originally belonged to it, can also be attributed to Máel Ísu and his workshop. One of these is from St John's Priory (Hospital) in Dublin (BM, 1868-7-9/52; pl. 30),¹⁴⁵ while the other, that of a bishop, is of unknown provenance, but was acquired from James Underwood, the Dublin-based dealer, in the nineteenth century (pl. 31).¹⁴⁶ Both figures share a number of similarities in terms of their size and style – particularly close are their vestments, suggesting that they derive from the same object, presumably a large shrine similar to St Manchán's. Significantly, the figure of the bishop carries a volute crozier and wears a mitre linking it with a church that embraced

139 *AU*, *ALC*, s.a. 1108. 140 *AU*, *ALC*, *AFM*, s.a. 1116. 141 *AFM*, s.a. 1133; *AMisc.*, s.a. 1134; *AT*, p. 364. 142 *CS*, *AFM*, s.a. 1150; *AT*, p. 386. 143 Gwynn, *Irish church*, pp 234–70. 144 Murray, 'Aghadoe and River Laune crosiers', p. 59. 145 Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, p. 113, pl. 47; C. Bourke, 'Three twelfth-century appliqué figures' in Mac Niocaill and Wallace (eds), *Keimelia*, p. 117, pl. 5. 146 Anon., 'Proceedings', *PRIA*, 5 (1853), 85; Henry, *Irish art in the Romanesque period*, p. 113; R. Stalley, 'Irish art in the Romanesque and Gothic periods' in P. Cone (ed.), *Treasures of early Irish art, 1500BC to 1500AD* (New York, 1977), p. 215, cat. no. 64; R. Ó Floinn, 'Gilt bronze figure of an ecclesiastic' in Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, pp 32, 176, cat. no. 84; Bourke, 'Three twelfth-century appliqué figures', pp 117, 119, pl. 4.

current foreign forms of dress and insignia.¹⁴⁷ Since St John's Priory was not founded until around 1188, the figure found there must originally have been made for an earlier foundation.

Ó Floinn has discussed in detail the relics that belonged to Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin.¹⁴⁸ These were re-enshrined some time after the consecration of Bishop Gréne in 1121 and Ó Floinn argues that this new reliquary was probably in the form of a gabled shrine. Given his control of the town and his support for the bishop at this time, it is conceivable that Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair was involved in commissioning this shrine. In this light, it seems likely that the figure from St John's, and perhaps the figure of a bishop also, came from the reliquary at Christ Church Cathedral. The reason for the re-enshrinement was probably to re-emphasize the importance of these relics and thus to support Dublin's claim for archdiocesan status. This would have had a direct resonance with the enshrining of a relic of the True Cross in Connacht in what is now known as the Cross of Cong.

As has been suggested by Ó Floinn, the strong ecclesiastical connection between Dublin and Canterbury is one way in which the Urnes style may have become popular in Ireland.¹⁴⁹ Even though the style is mainly found on secular objects in England, it does also occur in ecclesiastical contexts, such as on a crozier head from Durham, dated to the end of the eleventh century.¹⁵⁰ Olwyn Owen, however, in her paper on the English-Urnes style, concluded that 'there is almost no relationship between the English Urnes style and the independent development of the Irish Urnes style; the picture in Ireland is entirely different'.¹⁵¹ One might suspect, therefore, that the adoption of the Urnes style in both Ireland and England was a result of more direct contacts with Scandinavia itself.

CONCLUSION

It seems likely that Dublin was the source of inspiration for the Hiberno-Urnes style decoration on the Cross of Cong, St Manchán's shrine, the Holycross plaque, Aghadoe crozier and other products of Máel Ísu and his workshop. Indeed, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair seems to have had less direct contact with the other Hiberno-Scandinavian towns at the time, which were probably less politically important. The Hiberno-Urnes style was not only adopted for religious metalwork under the patronage of Ua Conchobair, but also for

¹⁴⁷ See R. Ó Floinn, 'Bishops, liturgy and reform: some archaeological and art historical evidence' in Bracken and Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe*, pp 218–38. ¹⁴⁸ R. Ó Floinn, 'The foundation relics of Christ Church Cathedral and the origins of the diocese of Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2005* (Dublin, 2006), pp 89–102. ¹⁴⁹ Ó Floinn, 'Irish and Scandinavian art', p. 96. ¹⁵⁰ Owen, 'English Urnes style', p. 206. ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

monumental stone sculpture in the form of the market cross at Tuam and manuscript illumination in the form of the Corpus Missal. This new art style appears to have been consciously adopted to decorate the most precious religious art in Connacht. It is a style that is rooted in tradition, but also embraces the new and the foreign, and mirrors the direction of the Irish church between the synods of Cashel in 1101 and Kells in 1152. As Ireland looked outwards in the early twelfth century, it did so in part through its major ports, the Hiberno-Scandinavian towns, which were then ruled by Irish kings. The foreign art of these towns, which for generations had no resonance outside the areas of Scandinavian influence in Ireland, now became fashionable. Some of the earliest dated artworks in Ireland to feature Urnes-style influence are the shrine of St Patrick's bell commissioned by Domnall Mac Lochlainn, king of the Northern Uí Néill, some time around 1094–1105¹⁵² and the arm-shrine of St Laichtín commissioned by Tadhg and Cormac Mac Carthaig, kings of Desmond, some time between 1118 and 1121.¹⁵³

Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair and Muiredach Ua Dubthaig were striving for an archdiocesan capital for Connacht. The Cross of Cong, the market cross at Tuam and other commissions were part of the essential infrastructure of that capital. If Connacht wanted to be taken seriously as a relevant power in the church reform movement, it was important that its religious art was decorated in the fashionable style. As the political situation changed in Ireland in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, with Irish kings then ruling the Hiberno-Scandinavian towns, so too did attitudes towards Scandinavian ornament. The ecclesiastical situation had also changed with Dublin and other Hiberno-Scandinavian towns, such as Waterford and Limerick, playing more of a central role in ecclesiastical politics and the reform movement. Therefore, the Cross of Cong is representative of a cultural identity influenced by the art of the main ethnicities in Ireland – the native Irish and the Hiberno-Scandinavian – which were brought together in the form of the Hiberno-Urnes style as a result of the secular and ecclesiastical politics of the time.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² R. Ó Floinn, 'Iron bell of St Patrick and its shrine' in Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, pp 167–8, cat. no. 79. ¹⁵³ R. Ó Floinn, 'Arm shrine of St Lachtin' in Ryan (ed.), *Treasures of Ireland*, pp 169–70, cat. no. 80; Murray, 'Arm-shaped reliquary of St Lachtin'. ¹⁵⁴ This essay is largely based on a section of my PhD thesis, which was completed in 2007 in the Department of Archaeology, UCC, under the supervision of John Sheehan and with the support of a scholarship from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. I am very grateful to Eamonn P. Kelly, former Keeper of Irish Antiquities, and all of his colleagues in the NMI for facilitating my examination of the Cross of Cong and many of the other objects discussed as part of this study; to Leslie Webster, formerly of the BM, for facilitating my examination of material in that institution; and to Bishop Colm O'Reilly and Fr Sean Bourke for facilitating my examination of St Manchán's shrine.

Rathdown slabs revisited

CHRISTIAAN CORLETT

The Rathdown slabs are some of the most distinctive grave-slabs found in Ireland and have earned their name from the fact that they are found only in the former barony of Rathdown. Today the barony is divided by the modern Dublin and Wicklow county boundary, but it is clear that from at least early historic times it formed a distinct political territory. Paddy Healy first gave the series their name,¹ and subsequently suggested that the distinctive decoration of these grave-slabs was ‘the invention of the Scandinavian inhabitants of the district, and that these monuments were erected between the ninth and the twelfth century’.² Since then, the Viking origins of these gravestones has been broadly accepted, but rarely questioned.

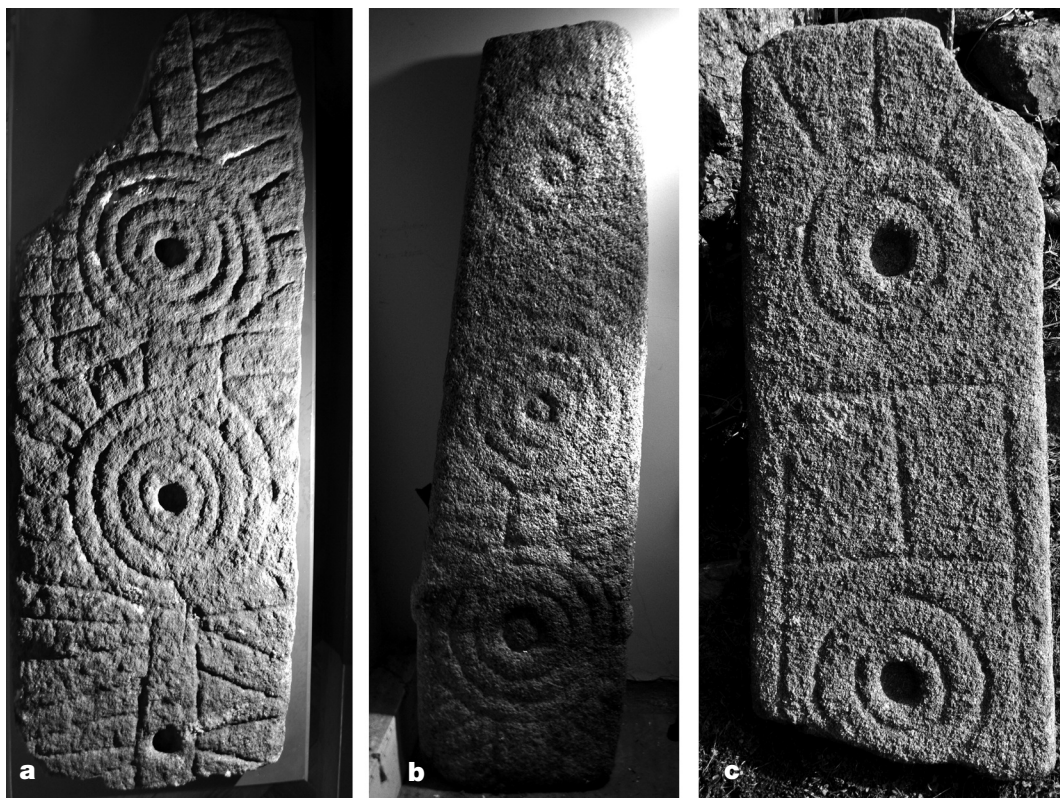
The known examples of Rathdown slabs have all been found at early church sites, namely Ballyman, Dalkey, Kilbride (outside Bray), Kilgobbin, Killegar, Kiltiernan, Rathfarnham, Rathmichael, Taney, Tully and Whitechurch. They are notably absent from several early church sites in the area: for example, Carrigbrennan (Monkstown), Kilcrone, Killiney and Kill O’ the Grange, but that is not to say that examples will not be found at these sites in the future.

The main motifs found on these stones are cup-marks, concentric circles, linear bands, herringbone patterns, arcs and crosses. These individual motifs broadly compare with motifs on some pre-Anglo-Norman grave-slabs found elsewhere in Ireland, but in truth their application on the Rathdown slabs is highly distinctive and not found anywhere else. In particular, the preference for all-over decoration on the Rathdown slabs is unusual for pre-Anglo-Norman grave-slabs in Ireland.

MOTIFS

The use of concentric circles is most frequent in combination with cup-marks and together these form the typical motif of the Rathdown slabs (fig. 25.1). As we shall see, there are a number of other motifs, but it is true to say that the cup-and-rings are the most dominant and distinctive to be found in the series. These usually take the form of two or three concentric rings around a central cup-mark, though an example from Ballyman has four rings.

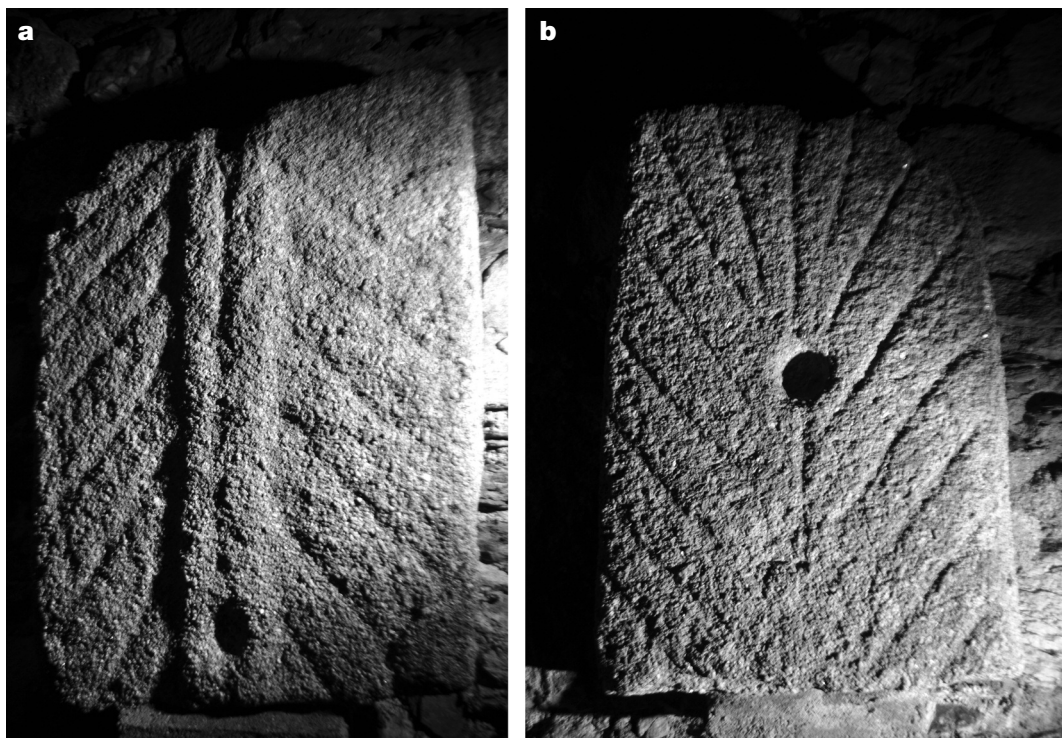
1 P. Ó hÉailidhe, ‘The Rathdown slabs’, *JRSAL*, 87 (1957), 75–88. 2 P. Ó hÉailidhe, ‘Early Christian grave-slabs in the Dublin region’, *JRSAL*, 103 (1973), 59.



25.1 Rathdown slabs (right to left) from Ballyman, Tully and Killegar.

At Killegar, Co. Wicklow, there is a large slab that is broken across one end. At either end of the stone is a double ring around a central cup-mark. One of these is framed within a box and forming part of this motif is another rectangular box divided into two blank spaces. One stone from Ballyman had been reused as a lintel for a window of the early thirteenth-century church, now in ruins at the site. A linear band extends across the stone and is broken by two dominant cup-and-ring motifs, each consisting of a cup-mark enclosed by four concentric rings. The cups measure 4cm and 4.5cm across and the outer rings are 34cm and 32cm across respectively.

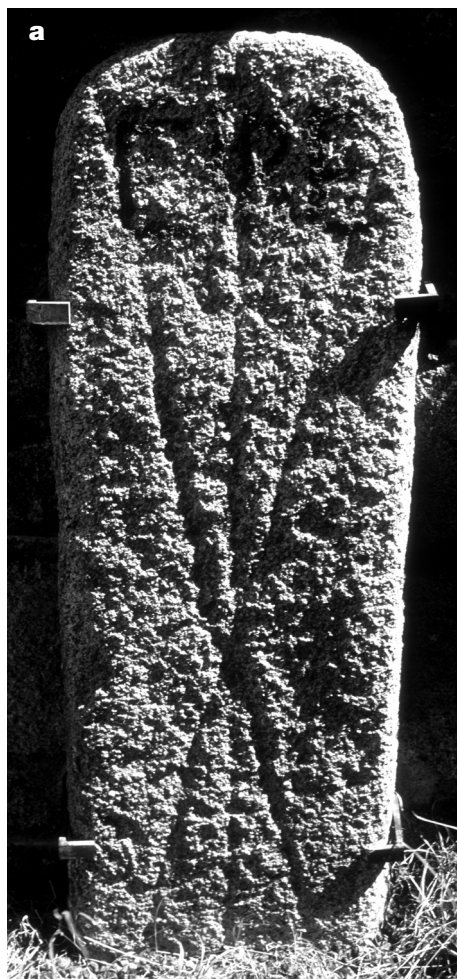
A linear band is also found on two slabs at Tully. The complete slab there is arguably one of the finest in the entire series. It measures 1.55m long and 14cm thick. The slab tapers and measures 42cm wide at the top and 28cm at the base. Towards the upper end are opposing, stubby projections, like reduced cross arms. It bears a central band on which there are three sets of concentric circles. Each of these has a central cup-mark, which could be read as a sunken boss. These cups are 6cm, 8cm and 9cm across. The upper set consists of four



25.2 Two fragments with herringbone pattern at Rathmichael.

concentric circles. The rest of the slab is infilled with a herringbone design. Elsewhere, cup-marks are sometimes found without concentric circles, particularly in association with crosses.

As we have seen, linear bands are an important feature of some of these stones. They do not divide the space on a slab, but are in fact a motif in their own right. They tend to be overshadowed by the dominant presence of the cup-and-ring motifs. In one instance at Rathmichael, however, the linear band is the main motif and is accompanied by a series of simple cup-marks placed along the central band, which is flanked by faint lines that form a crude herringbone pattern. The herringbone pattern is a dominant feature of two stones at Rathmichael and a stone from Dalkey, where they are accompanied by small cup-marks and in one case fill in the space on either side of a central linear band. All three are broken fragments and it seems unlikely, though not impossible, that the complete design consisted solely of the herringbone pattern. Elsewhere, the herringbone pattern is found in combination with other motifs. For example, where cup-and-rings are dominant the herringbone pattern is used to infill the spaces between the circles. The herringbone pattern also features on a number



25.3 Saltire crosses on Rathdown slabs from Kilgobbin (a) and Taney (b).



25.4 Simple crosses on Rathdown slabs from Killegar (top) and Kiltiernan (below).





25.5 Elaborate crosses on Rathdown slabs from Killegar (left) and Tully (right).

of stones featuring crosses. Radiating lines on some examples are effectively a reduced form of herringbone pattern (fig. 25.2).

Incised arcs are a feature of a small group of stones at Dalkey, Killegar, Rathfarnham and Rathmichael. These are usually placed around the edge of the stone. It may be significant that on three of the four stones featuring arcs the dominant motif is a cross (Rathmichael is the exception). There are several cross forms on the Rathdown slabs. The most common is an incised saltire cross, which is found on four examples, one each at Kilgobbin, Rathfarnham, Taney and Whitechurch (fig. 25.3). At both Kilgobbin and Taney the saltire cross features a central line that extends the full length of the stone. There is a small cup-mark at the centre of the cross and at Whitechurch there is a crude herringbone pattern.

Other cross forms in the Rathdown group consist of simple incised crosses (fig. 25.4) at Killegar (which sits on a cup-and-double-ring motif and features a cup-mark at the centre of the cross) and a fragment at Kiltiernan (which extends from a large cup-mark).

More elaborate examples are found at Dalkey, Killegar and Tully (fig. 25.5). The Tully stone features a Latin cross in bold relief with sunken arcs, giving the

impression of a ring. There is a cup-mark at the end of each of the arms, as well as one at the intersection. These measure 4cm to 5cm across and 1.5cm deep. There is also a domed boss under each arm. The spaces flanking both sides of the cross shaft are filled in with a herringbone design.

A large stone at Killegar features a cross in relief that extends the full length and width of the stone. At the ends of the cross arms are large cup-marks, as well as one at the centre of the cross. The space flanking either side of the cross shaft is filled with a series of incised arcs. At first glance, both the Tully and the Killegar slabs appear to represent more conventional grave-slabs, but both have sufficient features that fit in best with the overall series of Rathdown slabs. This is particularly evident in the example from Dalkey. Here, the main motif consists of a cross-in-circle. At the centre of the cross is a cup-mark. The cross extends through the circle as far as another cup-mark, which is enclosed by a penannular ring. At one end of the slab is a cup enclosed by a double ring and at the opposite end the stone has broken across another cup and double circle. On the edges of the stone are a number of incised arcs.

There are also a number of other cross slabs that have certain features in common with the Rathdown slabs, namely at Whitechurch near Rathfarnham and the two church sites of Kilbride and Killarney in Bray, but it is not proposed to discuss these further here.

DISCUSSION

There is no doubt that the Rathdown slabs represent recumbent grave-markers in a Christian tradition. The complete examples are large enough to have covered an entire extended grave (though that is not to say that they served as lintel graves). Generally they have a slight tapering form, though not so pronounced as in later medieval grave-slabs. The question remains, however, as to whether they represent the grave-markers of secular individuals or of ecclesiastics. While it is conceivable that the examples featuring saltire crosses, or perhaps all of those in the series featuring crosses, represent the grave-markers of ecclesiastics, it is by no means certain. Indeed, it seems highly unlikely for those featuring more abstract designs, which may have marked secular graves. This is significant in that the Rathdown slabs probably represent the largest group of pre-Anglo-Norman secular grave-slabs anywhere in Ireland.

Given that the selection of motifs is so narrow and that there is little evidence for an evolution of the series, this may imply that the Rathdown slabs had a relatively short lifespan, possibly little more than fifty years and representing two or no more than three generations. While some of the decorative motifs might be early, the overall appearance of the slabs, including their scale and slightly tapering form, suggests a later date, perhaps late eleventh to mid-twelfth century.



25.6 Stone with Crucifixion and cup-and-ring motif from Killegar.

A further indication of a late date is a fragment of a cross from Killegar, now in the National Museum of Ireland. The piece consists of a portion of a granite cross-head. On one face is a distinctive Crucifixion scene carved in false relief and on the other face is a cup-mark encircled by two rings (fig. 25.6). The Crucifixion scene is distinctive because it is identical to those found on a very small number of stone crosses that, like the Rathdown slabs, are found only in the former barony of Rathdown – at Fassaroe (possibly originally from Ballyman), Kiltuck and Rathmichael. The Killegar example compares best with the crosses from Kiltuck and Rathmichael. This small collection of crosses was previously described by Healy, who was probably correct when he suggested that they most likely date to the twelfth century.³ It is of course possible that the Killegar cross was simply carved out by recycling a Rathdown slab, but close examination of the stone suggests that this is not the case. This implies that the two forms of stone sculpture are contemporary and related in some way, although the function of these crosses is unclear.

Commentators have invariably made passing reference to the Rathdown slabs as evidence for Norse settlement in the southern hinterland of Dublin. To date, no one has really questioned their significance. While it is generally accepted that they represent an attempt to display a form of identity, it has never been convincingly argued that this was an ethnic (that is Norse) one. Equally, the question has never been resolved as to why they occur only in Rathdown and not in other areas of Norse influence, either around Dublin itself or elsewhere. It is argued here that the Rathdown slabs do indeed represent a display of Norse identity, but not in the ‘artistic’ way that was previously thought.

In his discussion of the Rathdown slabs, Healy considered the cup-and-ring and the herringbone motifs to be popular elements of Viking art. It is true that the ring-and-dot motif occurs on many artefacts found in Viking contexts during the excavations in Dublin, as well as on a Norse whalebone plaque from Cherrywood (close to the church sites at Tully and Rathmichael).⁴ It is also true that the ring-and-dot motif is found throughout Ireland during this period and is not restricted to Viking art. Equally, the herringbone motif is not a purely Viking motif. The saltire cross, which is found on four of the Rathdown slabs, is a common motif on a wider variety of Viking artefacts and is less common in Insular art of the period.⁵ What may be more significant, however, is that the motifs more commonly found in the Urnes or earlier styles of Viking art are absent from the Rathdown slabs. At face value, this would appear to rule out a Viking association with the series.

³ P. Ó hÉilidhe, ‘Fassaroe and associated crosses’, *JRSAL*, 88 (1958), 101–10. An earlier date is highly unlikely and a date after the twelfth century is equally unlikely. Suggestions that these represent a local form of wayside cross of seventeenth-century date can be ruled out entirely.

⁴ J. Ó Néill, ‘Excavation of pre-Norman structure on the site of an enclosed Early Christian cemetery at Cherrywood, County Dublin’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VII: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2005* (Dublin, 2006), pp 66–88. ⁵ C. Corlett,

Nevertheless, the motifs found on the Rathdown slabs may not be purely decorative and therefore the lack of a direct comparison with Viking art of the period may be misleading. As noted, the cup-and-ring motif is one of the commonest found on the Rathdown slabs and it has been compared to the ring-and-dot motif found on various small objects, both Viking and Insular, from this period. Unlike the ring-and-dot motif, however, which invariably comprises a ring with a central dot, the motif found on the Rathdown slabs always consists of cups with two or more rings. Therefore they are not really the same motif and comparisons between the two are misleading, if not irrelevant. This raises the question of what was the inspiration for the cup-and-ring and other motifs found on Rathdown slabs.⁶

If these are for the most part secular grave-slabs, what can we infer about the motifs described above? As noted, the choice of motifs is rather limited, though there is some variety in the combinations of motifs. Yet they must represent more than simply abstract designs selected purely for aesthetics. Instead, the repeated use of selected motifs implies that they had a symbolic meaning. Healy himself previously suggested that 'there can be little doubt that these designs had some symbolic meaning, as they were repeated again and again in so many different combinations'.⁷ If so, what could that symbolic meaning be?

The distinctive cup-and-ring motifs are broadly reminiscent of the commonest form of early Viking shields. These were typically small circular, wooden shields with a central boss. Thus, the multiple rings on the Rathdown slabs may be intended to represent such round shields, whereby the central cup-mark is in fact an inverted boss. It is generally suggested that round Viking shields were replaced by kite-shaped shields well before the twelfth century, but it is possible that in Ireland and in the Irish Sea area round shields were still being used in the late twelfth century. This is certainly implied by Giraldus Cambrensis in his account of the failed attempt by the Norse in 1171 to retake Dublin, arriving well-armed with iron swords, spears and axes, body armour and 'round, red shields protected by iron round the edge'.⁸ If it is the case that the cup-and-ring motifs on these stones were intended to represent round Viking shields, what might the significance of this have been?

By the late eleventh century it was not uncommon for Norman shields in England, Wales and France to feature family emblems and by the twelfth century these had evolved into the more formal coats of arms and heraldic symbols that we are familiar with today. Earlier round Viking shields are also likely to have

'Two recently discovered Rathdown slabs from Taney graveyard, Dundrum, Co. Dublin', *JRSAL*, 132 (2002), 142. ⁶ For some the cup and rings may be interpreted as an attempt to connect to a pagan past. Certainly cup-and-ring motifs are common in Irish rock art, but the few examples of rock art in Rathdown all feature the exclusive use of cup-marks and there are no known examples of complex cup-and-ring motifs in this area that may have inspired their use on the Rathdown slabs. ⁷ Ó hÉailidhe, 'Rathdown slabs', 87. ⁸ *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. and trans. A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin

been painted with colours and motifs that distinguished different families. Viking kite-shaped shields, too, were probably decorated with family colours and emblems. It could well be the case that what we are seeing on the Rathdown slabs are these family emblems translated on to stone. For example, if the cup-and-ring motifs on the Rathdown slabs are representative of round Viking shields, then it follows that they are in fact an attempt at representing family emblems, like a primitive form of heraldry. Accordingly the use of cup-and-rings may refer to a specific family or families, perhaps distinguished by the number of rings used in a given motif. The use of other motifs, such as central bands and herringbone patterns, may equally represent specific families. Furthermore, the combination of these on a given stone may have been intended to convey family connections and histories. The frequency of saltire crosses on the Rathdown slabs and the consistency with which they are used may imply that this was also a family emblem rather than indicative of an ecclesiastical grave. Moreover it is worth noting that this form of cross is found on secular Viking objects such as silver bracelets.⁹ Alternatively, even if these and the other cross forms are indicative of ecclesiastics, this need not rule out the possibility that some of the other motifs on the same stone were family emblems.

It is suggested above that the Rathdown slabs most likely date from the late eleventh to the mid-twelfth century and we have seen that there is documentary evidence to indicate that round shields were still in use at this time among the Hiberno-Norse. The overall form of the Rathdown slabs, however, may imply that their makers were also copying emblems found on Viking kite-shaped shields. Motifs such as herringbone patterns and saltire crosses would be perfectly at home on such elongated shields.

Whether or not it is accepted that the motifs on the Rathdown slabs are family emblems, the obvious question that comes to mind is what inspired their use in this small and specific geographical area? As mentioned above, one thing the Rathdown slabs appear to convey is an identity that is trying to set itself apart. But why was this necessary? Was there an identity crisis in the Rathdown area and, if so, what may have prompted it? It is known that there were strong links between this area and Wales in earlier centuries and the Hiberno-Norse of Dublin maintained strong ties with Wales during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. By the twelfth century, however, there appears to have been an active settlement of exiled Welsh in the hinterland of Dublin.¹⁰

To illustrate the potential impact of this Welsh settlement, we can use the parish of Tully (with its Rathdown slabs) as an example. Tully itself was

(Dublin, 1978), p. 77. ⁹ Corlett, 'Two recently discovered Rathdown slabs', 142. ¹⁰ E. O'Byrne, 'A much-disputed land: Carrickmines and the Dublin marches' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin IV: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2002* (Dublin, 2003), pp 229–52; E. O'Byrne, 'Cultures in contact in the Leinster and Dublin marches, 1170–1400' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin V: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium*

intimately connected with the Ostmen of Dublin and before 1169 the lands there were gifted to the archbishop of Dublin by Sitriuc mac Torcaill, the Hiberno-Norse ruler of Dublin.¹¹ In later times the lands around the church at Tully were linked with the Archbold family, of Norse origin. Among the lands that formed part of the broader parish of Tully were Brennanstown and Carrickmines. It has been argued that the name Brennanstown derives from the Irish *baile na Bretnach*, meaning 'town of the Welsh'. By the thirteenth century Ballyogan, Brennanstown and Carrickmines – all in the parish of Tully – were intimately connected with the Walsh and Howel families, again of Welsh origin, and it has been suggested that they may have been settled there well before 1169.¹²

Another likely example of this Welsh settlement in earlier Norse controlled lands is nearby Kilgobbin, also with examples of Rathdown slabs. This church was granted to the archbishop of Dublin by the Ostmen,¹³ that is to say, the Dublin Hiberno-Norse and probably the Harold family. In twelfth-century documents, Kilgobbin is listed under the name Theachabreatan, from *tech na mBretnach*, again implying Welsh connections. It is possible that this name was not intended as a reference to the church itself, but the name of the general lands surrounding the church, which may derive from a Welsh settlement by the mid-twelfth century. Although just outside the barony of Rathdown, Tibbradden may also take its name from *tech na mBretnach*,¹⁴ where notably a possible Rathdown slab, now missing, was described in the early nineteenth century.¹⁵

Accordingly, it appears that during the early to mid-twelfth century there was ethnic diversity in the Rathdown area, with not only Irish and Norse, who had already shared this area for a couple of centuries or more, but also with new Welsh settlers who must have changed the local dynamics. This must have been heightened in the years immediately after 1169, which saw the fall of the Meic Torcaill and the rise of other Hiberno-Norse families such as the Archbolds and Harolds, and of course the arrival into the area of new Anglo-Norman lineages. Could this new ethnic and cultural diversity in Rathdown have been the catalyst

2003 (Dublin, 2004), pp 111–48. 11 C. McNeill (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172–1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 28; M.J. McEnery and R. Refaüssé (eds), *Christ Church deeds* (Dublin, 2001), p. 103. 12 The name Howel derives from the Welsh Hywel, a traditional forename of the royal house of Gwynedd (O'Byrne, 'Much disputed land', p. 232), members of which are known to have been settled in Cloghran, north Co. Dublin (M.T. Flanagan, 'Historia Gruffud vab Kenan and the origins of Balrothery', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 28 (1994), 72–91. 13 The link between Kilgobbin and Tech na mBretnach is clear from a footnote in McNeill (ed.), *Alen's register* (p. 28). The dedication of the church to Gobban is also of interest, since it may be connected to Gobban who was a nephew of St David of Wales. It is entirely possible, therefore, that the church there was rededicated by Welsh settlers, though it seems equally possible that such a Welsh connection originates from a much earlier time. 14 Tibbradden, unlike Kilgobbin, was not claimed by the archbishop of Dublin. Instead, it was held by the hospital of St John of Jerusalem at Kilmainham near Dublin and was also known as Kilmainham Beg. 15 Ó hÉailidhe, 'Rathdown slabs', 86.

that inspired the grave-slabs and their apparent attempt to convey family identities and links of the Norse who lived in this area?

One problem with this argument is that there is equally strong evidence for a similar Welsh presence in the Hiberno-Norse land of Fingal north of the Liffey,¹⁶ yet the Rathdown slabs, and anything even resembling them, are entirely absent there. Perhaps the above discussion has done little to pinpoint the true significance of this unique and curious collection of grave-slabs. Even so, this attempt has highlighted the need to begin to explain the purpose of the Rathdown slabs and to place them into a cultural and political context, rather than view them simply as a curiosity.

CONCLUSION

The Rathdown slabs are a unique form of grave-slab, mostly secular and probably dating to the first half of the twelfth century. The motifs found on these grave-slabs are symbols designed to convey familial identities and links of the Norse descendants living in the area south of Dublin. It has also been suggested that early twelfth-century Welsh settlement in parts of Rathdown created an identity crisis among the existing Hiberno-Norse families that motivated them to display their ethnic identity and family alliances on their grave-slabs.

¹⁶ Flanagan, 'Historia Gruffud vab Kenan'.

Celtic berserkers and feeble steersmen: Hiberno-Scandinavian military culture in Middle Irish literature

CATHERINE SWIFT

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Hiberno-Norse archery assemblage is the dominance of armour-piercing arrowhead types, first appearing – in Dublin, at least – in the later tenth century. This is precisely in line with developments elsewhere. A range of sites across northern Europe have produced directly comparable evidence for a shift to armour-piercing forms in the later tenth century ... c.67% of all arrowheads from Hiberno-Norse Dublin are armour-piercing types, a striking proportion that is higher than that recorded in most contemporaneous excavated sites elsewhere in Europe. ... This not only indicates that Dublin was well in touch with the mainstream of European military development but also may raise questions about the use of armour by the Irish. ... One must conclude either that the warriors of Hiberno-Norse Dublin were equipping themselves primarily for action outside of Ireland or that the extent of armour usage among the Gaelic Irish in the eleventh and twelfth centuries has been significantly underestimated. ... Despite their distinctly mixed military record in Ireland, the Vikings and their Hiberno-Norse descendants had a profound effect on Irish military and political development.¹

This quotation from Andrew Halpin's recent monograph on Viking weaponry in Ireland forms the starting point for this essay, for it stands in stark contrast to the conclusions drawn by Gillian Fellows-Jensen in her 2001 article on Norse loanwords: 'there are only about twenty Norse loanwords in common use in Irish and this fact does not point to a great deal of linguistic contact between the Irish and the Vikings'.² It is argued here that it is the context in which Norse loanwords are used that is significant and the operation of a mixed material culture in the Hiberno-Norse era that such loanwords imply. Analysis of this vocabulary in Middle Irish sources, in fact, would seem to suggest that, far from continuing 'to live their own lives and to speak their own language in their

¹ A. Halpin, *Weapons and warfare in Viking and medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2008), pp 178–9.

² G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Nordic names and loanwords in Ireland' in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), p. 113.

strongholds' as Fellows-Jensen argued, Scandinavians in Ireland had indeed a profound effect on Irish military, cultural and even linguistic development.

In her articles on Vikings in Irish literature, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has drawn attention to the description of *forlunn echtrann*, 'hordes of foreigners', who come *dar glassa in mara móir*, 'across the great blue sea'.³ This description parallels that found in the twelfth-century *Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, which describes the *Normeigeis* as *la marine gent* or 'sea people'. This is significant in that the epithet *fer mara*, 'man of the sea' is used in the Irish genealogies of the ancestor figure Fiachu *Fer Mara* whose progeny were said to be scattered between the men of Munster, north-east Ireland (Cos Down and Antrim) and among the *Fir Alban*⁴ – all areas where we know Scandinavian settlement took place.⁵ *Fer Mara* is also a phrase attached to the famous Irish warrior Cú Chulainn, whose home place was Muirtheimne in the coastal region in Co. Louth between Dundalk and the Fewa mountains.⁶ In the twelfth-century recension of *Táin bó Cúailgne*, Cú Chulainn is said to take on the attributes of a *fer mara* specifically in the context of his *ríastrad* or battle transformation:

Is and sin ra chétriastrad im Choin Culaind goros lín att 7 infithsi mar anáil i llés co nderna thúaiḡ n-uathmair n-acbéil n-ildathaig n-ingantaig de, gomba métithir ra fomóir ná ra fer mara in milid mórchalma ós chind Fhir Diad i certarddi.

Then occurred Cú Chulainn's first distortion. He swelled and grew big as a bladder does when inflated and became a fearsome, terrible, many-coloured, strange arch and the valiant hero towered high above Fer Diad as big as a *fomóir* or a *fer mara*.⁷

The Fomoir are a group who are mentioned relatively frequently in the mythological Irish sagas, but perhaps the most relevant description, in this context, is that found in *Cath Maige Tuired* or the [second] Battle of Mag Tuired/Moytirra. This tale was characterized by Gerard Murphy as the 'product of an eleventh- or twelfth-century redactor working mainly upon ninth-century material' and

3 M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Friend and foe: Vikings in ninth- and tenth-century Irish literature' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 401; M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The Vikings in medieval Irish literature' in Larsen (ed.), *Vikings in Ireland*, p. 102; *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, ed. E. Mullally (Dublin, 2002), p. 116, lines 2470–2. 4 'Alba' is ambiguous in the early period and may refer to either Britain or, more particularly, to Scotland. For a discussion of the term in its ninth-century and later context, see M. Herbert, 'Ri Eirenn, ri Alban: kingship and identity in the ninth and tenth centuries' in S. Taylor (ed.), *Kings, clerics and chronicles in Scotland, 500–1297: essays in honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday* (Dublin, 2000), pp 62–72. 5 M.A. O'Brien (ed.), *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae*, 1 (Dublin, 1976), p. 129; F.J. Byrne, 'The Viking Age' in *NHI*, i, p. 620. 6 *Táin bó Cúailgne: recension 1*, ed. C. O'Rahilly (Dublin, 1976), pp 13, 136. 7 *Táin bó Cúailgne from the Book of Leinster*, ed. C. O'Rahilly (Dublin,

this dating has been followed by subsequent commentators.⁸ Here the king of the Fomoir is linked to a force of warriors from Scandinavia who came to Ireland via the Hebrides:

Faithius iar sin cusan trénfer co Balor húa Néitt co righ na n-Innsi 7 co hIndech mac Dé Domnand co rí Fomoir 7 nos-taireclamat-side do neoch buí ó Lochlainn síar do slúag doqum n-Érenn do astat a cisa 7 a rigi ar éigin foruib, gur ba háondroichet long ó Indsib Gallad co hÉirenn leo.

After that he sent him to the champion Balor, grandson of Nét, king of the Hebrides and to Indrech mac Dé Domnann, the king of the Fomoir and these gathered all the forces from *Lochlainn* westwards to Ireland, to impose their tribute and their rule upon them by force and they made a single bridge of ships from the Hebrides to Ireland.⁹

Lochlainn is a place-name used in Irish sources of the northern lands occupied by medieval Scandinavians with a tradition of raiding Ireland and it was probably originally located in the modern country of Norway.¹⁰ The Hebrides were also colonized by Norse speakers from the ninth century onwards.¹¹ This section in *Cath Maige Tuired* has been identified by John Carey as an original part of the ninth-century tale, which he sees as designed to represent, in mythological terms, the coming of Viking settlers from northern lands to Ireland.¹² In its later redaction, the geographical location of the Fomoir in the Hebrides would seem to suggest that such a connection continued to be made and may represent further evidence that Cú Chulainn, in his multi-coloured fearsomeness, could be seen as approaching the height and style of a Scandinavian warrior.

Possible Scandinavian influence on the depicted characteristics of great Irish warriors is not, however, limited to a description of Cú Chulainn. In the same twelfth-century recension of the *Táin bó Cúailgne*, Cú Chulainn's charioteer reports on an encounter forming part of the final set-piece battle:

Airm i tát na láith gaile anair isin cath bétait toilg trisin cath síar. Airm i tát na láith aníar béráit toilg trisin cath sair. 'Appraind nacham fhuil-sea do nirt beith eturru dom choiss de-side, dáig dá mbeind-sea do nirt beith dom choiss, rapad réil mo thoilg-sea and sain indiu i cumma cháich'.

1967), p. 92, lines 3316–20, and p. 228. 8 G. Murphy, 'Notes on *Cath Maige Tuired*', *Éigse*, 7 (1954), 195. 9 *Cath Maige Tuired: the second Battle of Mag Tuired*, ed. E. Gray (London, 1983), pp 30–1. 10 C. Etchingham, 'The location of historical *Laithlinn/Lochlainn*: Scotland or Scandinavia' in M. Ó Flaithearta (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Uppsala, 2007), pp 11–31. 11 A. Jennings and A. Kruse, 'From Dál Riata to the Gall-Ghàidheil', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 5 (2009), 123–49. 12 J. Carey, 'Myth and mythology in *Cath Maige Tuired*', *Studia Celtica*, 24–5 (1989–90), 53–69.

As for the champions who come from the east to the battle, they will make a breach (*tolg*) through the battle-line to the west. As for the champions who come from the west, they will make a breach through the battle-line to the east. 'Alas that I am not strong enough to go afoot among them! For if I were, my breach too would be clearly seen there today like that of the rest'.¹³

The word *tolg*, which Cecile O'Rahilly has translated as 'breach', is given two, apparently entirely separate, meanings in the *Dictionary of the Irish language*.¹⁴ The first, which is attested in the eighth-century law tract *Críth Gablach*, is a compartment or cubicle, often found around a bed. The second, which is attested only in Middle Irish sources, is an attack or a breach caused by an attack. On the face of it, there seems little reason to connect these two words, but the semantic links are illuminated in another episode from the same text referring to Conchobar's fighting prowess, which yet again speaks of enclosures on the battlefield:

Déntar dunibúali urslocthi do fheraib Hérend ar cind Conchobuir... Daríacht Conchobar d'indsaigid na dunibúaled aursloicthi ⁊ ní rabi ic íarraid a dorais don tsainruth itir, acht ra minaig beirn inaid míled ar urchomair a gnúsi ⁊ a agthi isin chath ⁊ bern chét dá leith deiss ⁊ bern cét dá leith chlí ⁊ imsoí chuccu inmond ⁊ ras mesc thall fora lár ⁊ torchratar ocht cét láech lánchalma lais díb.

The men of Ireland were drawn up in an open *dunibúaille* to face Conchobar ... Conchobar came to this open *dunibúaille* and he in no wise sought a way of entry but cut a breach broad enough for a soldier opposite his face and his countenance and cut a breach broad enough for a hundred on his right hand and another breach for a hundred on his left and he turned in on them and wrought confusion in their midst and eight hundred valiant warriors of them fell at his hands.¹⁵

The enclosure referred to here is a compound of the word *duine*, 'a person', and *búaille* defined as 'cow-house, byre; cattle-pen; (temporary) cattlefold, booley at times of summer pasturage'. In the opinion of the *Dictionary of the Irish language* editors, it is related to the Old Norse word *ból*, which has been defined, in turn, as the lying-place of beasts and cattle, a couch or bed, and a farm.¹⁶ In his *Lexique étymologique de l'Irlandais ancien*, Vendryes then adds further information, citing references to a *buaile* 'of uncertain meaning' under which he lists

¹³ *Táin bó Cúailgne*, p. 128, lines 4623–8, and p. 264. ¹⁴ E.G. Quin et al. (eds), *Dictionary of the Irish language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials* (revised ed. Dublin, 2013), T 239–40. ¹⁵ *Táin bó Cúailgne*, pp 117, lines 4254–5; 118, lines 4271–6, and p. 253. ¹⁶ G.T. Zoëga, *A concise dictionary of Old Icelandic* (Toronto, 2004), p. 65; R. Cleasby and G. Vigfússon, *An Icelandic–English dictionary* (Oxford, 1957), p. 74.

buaile Bodba, ‘the *búaile* of the war-goddess Bodb’, linked to a *cath-múr de chollaib*, a ‘battle wall made up of corpses’ and a *cathbualti* glossed with *cualgae*, a ‘palisade of spears or a war [battle?]-enclosure’. This, he suggests, ‘semble être un emploi particulier de 1. Buaile’, where ‘1. Buaile’ is defined as a word for stable/summer pasturage.¹⁷ The semantic overlaps discussed by these various lexicographers make it seem that a *dunibúaile* is an enclosure made up of individuals that was formed in the context of a military encounter.

Another twelfth-century saga is *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, forming part of what Brian Ó Cuív has identified as ‘the historical dynastic literature composed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries’.¹⁸ Recent scholarship has agreed that this text reflects political relationships between the Mac Carthaig and the Uí Briain of Thomond in the 1120s and early 1130s.¹⁹ Within this tale we find the following:

Is and do coraighedh ag laechraid Lochlainn sonn trom treabardhaingen trenluirech 7 dún dluithduaibhsech duibhiarainn 7 cathair clogudghlas cruadhaebrach chaithsciath 7 ruadbhuaili remharcrainn.

Then there was arrayed by the heroes of *Lochlainn* a solid, skilful and firm rampart of strong coats of mail and a thick dark stronghold of black iron and a grey-helmeted, harshly sharp-edged city of battle-shields and a strong *búaile* of stout shafts.²⁰

The phrase *cathair chaithsciath*, ‘city of battle-shields’ is strongly reminiscent of the Norse term *skjaldborg*, ‘shield wall’, particularly when one considers that the Irish had long been accustomed to using the word *borg* – in this case a borrowing from late Latin *burgus* – as a synonym for ‘city’ when describing sites such as Tara.²¹ *Skjaldborg* is found relatively frequently in Norse sagas and is used, for example, in *Brennu-Njáls saga* to refer to the defensive enclosure of armed men that surrounded King Brian Bórama at the Battle of Clontarf.²² It is also used of the Norse forces at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066.²³ Neither of these sagas is a contemporary eleventh-century account, but they do indicate a belief in later twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Iceland that the military tactics

17 E. Bachellery and P.-Y. Lambert, *Lexique étymologique de l'Irlandais ancien de J. Vendryes* (Dublin and Paris, 1981), B-109. 18 B. Ó Cuív, ‘Literary creation and Irish historical tradition’, *PBA*, 49 (1963), 233–62. 19 D. Ó Corráin, ‘Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: history or propaganda?’, *Ériu*, 25 (1974), 9; C. Breatnach, ‘Historical tales’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Ireland: an encyclopedia* (Abingdon and New York, 2005), p. 222. 20 *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil: the victorious career of Cellachan of Cashel*, ed. A. Bugge (Kristiania, 1905), p. 7, § 12, and p. 64 with slight emendations by the present author as to translation. 21 E. Bhreathnach, ‘Caput, civitas, oppidum, borg: Tara, a renowned fortress’, *Seanchas Ardmhacha*, 16:2 (1995), 22–6. 22 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. E. Ó. Sveinsson (Reykjavík, 1954), pp 444–60, § 157. 23 Snorri Sturluson, ‘Haralds saga Sigurðsonar’ in *Heimskringla*, ed. B. Aðalbjarnarson, 3 vols (Reykjavík, 2002), iii, pp 178–92, § 92.

involved were used by both Irish and Scandinavians in Britain and Ireland in that period.

A Middle Irish translation of the Roman poet Lucan's *Pharsalia* provides us with a vision of how such a *búaile* may have appeared to Irish onlookers:

Is amhlaidh tancatar, ⁊ coróin dluith da sciathaibh ina timchell, ⁊ cathcliath dá n-gaeibh ós a cennaibh, ⁊ cách díb og díden araile, ⁊ inni occá m-biadh in sciath ic díden in neich oc ná bídh.

Thus they came, with a dense circle of shields around them, and a battle-hurdle of their spears above their heads, and each of them guarding another, that is, he who had a shield protecting him who had no shield.²⁴

As a description, this seems remarkably close to the portrayal of King Harold's housecarls defending their king on the Bayeux Tapestry.²⁵ Taking all the citations above into consideration, therefore, it seems reasonable to deduce that the Norse-derived word *búaile* represents an enclosure of armed men using spears and defended by shields, and that it was used in Irish to describe a military tactic borrowed originally from Scandinavians and practised in both Ireland and Britain by the time of our twelfth-century texts. It, in turn, seems to have influenced the semantic development of the native Irish word *tolg*, which, while originally designating a wicker wall or compartment within a larger housing unit, seems to have evolved to be used of an attack that breaks the line of a *búaile* in a military context. As such, these two words imply that the Irish had, by the twelfth century if not earlier, adopted this particular fighting technique from Norse and Anglo-Saxon practice.

The same group of Middle Irish texts also indicates that the Irish had adopted weapons that were particularly favoured by the Norse. In *Cathréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, for example, the Ciarraige of the mid-west are described as fighting the Lochlannaig (people of *Lochlainn*) in the following manner:

Ro dibraighedh eturra saitheda soigeat ⁊ groidgreasa garbcloch ⁊ frasa firgera faghadh ⁊ sleagh selota sithremar ... ro imerseat imarcraigh a sainnti ara sleaghuibh ⁊ treisi a tachuir ara tuaghuibh ⁊ cruaidhi a comluinn ara cloidhmhibh ⁊ sceanamdeacht a scainder ara scenuibh.

Then they exchanged attacks of arrows and piercing assaults of rough stones and abundant truly sharp showers of short spears and skilfully directed long and thick spears ... They plied their spears with excessive eagerness, their battle-axes with the power of their mustering, their swords

²⁴ W. Stokes (ed. and trans.), 'In cath Catharda: The civil war of the Romans. An Irish version of Lucan's *Pharsalia*' in W. Stokes and E. Windisch (eds), *Irische Texte, mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, 4th ser., pt 2 (Leipzig, 1909), pp 142–3. ²⁵ R.P. Abels, *Lordship and military obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), fig. 5.

with the harshness of their combined anger and their knives with the sharpness of their assault.²⁶

The word used here for battle-axe is the native Irish *tuag*, which is attested from the early Old Irish period in the place-name *Cellola Tog*.²⁷ Nevertheless, we have no reference to axes being used as weapons of war in the pre-Viking period, while a poem inserted into the entry for the year 895 in the Annals of Ulster by a different hand specifically refers to them in the context of Scandinavian attacks:

Truagh, a noeb-Patraicc, nar anacht t'ernaicthi
In Gaill cona tuaghaibh, ic bualad do dherthaighi

Alas, O holy Patrick, that your prayers did not protect [Armagh] when the Foreigners with their axes were attacking your church.²⁸

The other instances of *tuag* as 'battle-axe' cited in the *Dictionary of the Irish language* come from Middle Irish texts that are translations of older classical or biblical tales. Thus, in *In cath Catharda*, for example, the warriors of Pompey's army are described as *ic trothadh a tuagh*, 'whetting their axes', as part of their preparations to follow a commander described as being like a 'stiurusmann lunga luchtmuri lanmoire cusa teccaim gaeth rothren a n-aghaid', a 'steersman of a great capacious ship filled with men when a too-strong wind shall come against their faces'.²⁹ The Scandinavian context for this idiom is underlined by the use of the Norse loanword *stiúrusmann*, which will be discussed below. It seems reasonable, therefore, to understand the Ciarraige war-axes as representing, in all likelihood, the adoption of the war-axe by native Irish people. Giraldus Cambrensis makes it clear that such adoptions were widespread to the point where he could state in his twelfth-century *Topographia Hiberniae* that the axe was one of the commonest weapons in use among the Irish:

Tribus tamen utuntur armorum generibus; lanceis non longis, et iaculis binis; in quibus et Basclensium morem sunt imitati; et securibus amplis fabrilis diligentia optime calibatis, quas a Norwagiensibus et Oustmannis, de quibus post dicetur, sunt mutuati.

They use, however, three types of weapon – short spears, two darts (in this they imitate the Basclenses) and big axes, well and carefully forged, which they have taken over from the Norwegians and the Ostmen, about which we shall speak later.³⁰

²⁶ *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, p. 45, § 78, and p. 104. ²⁷ L. Bieler (ed.), *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, 1979), pp 154, § 39; 160, § 48. ²⁸ *AU*, s.a. 895. ²⁹ Stokes (ed.), 'In cath Catharda', pp 344–5, lines 4613–4, 4637. A later reference occurs in *AMisc.*, s.a. 1209. ³⁰ J.J. O'Meara (ed.), 'Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie.

Giraldus' words are confirmed by the evidence of archaeology. In a recent article, Halpin summarized the available material as follows:

Giraldus was surprisingly well-informed in knowing that the Irish had adopted the axe from the Norse – a point confirmed by archaeology since all known battle axes of this period are derived from Scandinavian forms, particularly Petersen's (1919) Type M. Such axes are relatively common in Ireland and generally dated to about the eleventh century but there is evidence for a development from the classic Scandinavian forms, characterised by a broadening of the neck of the axehead and a progressively more upward-splaying blade.³¹

Apart from axes, other weapons described in Irish sources appear to be of Scandinavian origin. In the twelfth-century *Táin bó Cúailgne*, for example, we find a detailed description of a miraculous spear belonging to the Ulster warrior Causcraid Mend Macha, the son of King Conchobor mac Nessa:

Caindell ríghthaige 'na láim go féthanaib argait ⁊ co fonascaib óir. Is ingnad reba ⁊ ábarta dogní in tsleg fil 'na láim na óclaige. Immireithet impe na féthana argit sechna fonascaib óir cachla céin ó erlond gó indsma. In céind aill, dano, it iat na fonasca óir immireithet sechna féthanaib argit ó indsma gó hirill.

[A spear like] the torch of a royal palace in his hand with bands of silver and rings of gold. Wonderful are the feats and games performed by that spear in the warrior's hand. The silver bands revolve around the golden rings alternately from butt to socket and alternately the golden rings revolve around the silver bands from socket to thong.³²

Clearly this particular type of spear was relatively well known, for we find a similar description in the tale of *Táin bó Fraích*. The description is of Fraéich's retinue who have been dressed and equipped by his aunt Bóand (the Otherworld personification of the River Boyne):

Caindel ríghthigi i lláim cech áe ⁊ coíca semmand findruine ar cech n-áe. Coíca toracht di ór forloiscthi im cech n-áe.

Text of the first recension', *PRIA*, 52C (1948–50), 163; Gerald of Wales, *The history and topography of Ireland*, ed. and trans. J.J. O'Meara (London, 1982), p. 101, § 93. 31 A. Halpin, 'Weapons and warfare in Viking-Age Ireland' in J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005* (Dublin, 2010), p. 126; A. Halpin, 'The galloglach axe revisited' in T. Condit and C. Corlett (eds), *Above and beyond: essays in memory of Leo Swan* (Bray, 2005), pp 361–72. 32 *Táin bó Cúailgne*, p. 119, lines 4317–20, and p. 255.

A torch of a royal palace in the hand of every one and fifty rivets of pale gold on every one. Fifty round coils of refined gold around every one.³³

A spear whose socket was ornamented with bands of silver was found in the burial of a ninth- or tenth-century warrior found outside the ditched enclosure at Woodstown in Co. Waterford in 2004. This applied silver decoration is something of a feature of weapons of the late Viking Age – battleaxes that are similarly decorated have, for example, been found near Ballina in Co. Mayo and in Donegal.³⁴ Such a style in weaponry is found in several locations in northern Europe and it seems to be a feature that, once again, was adopted by people in Britain and Ireland under Scandinavian influence. In *Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu*, for example, the visiting Iclander is given *breiðoxi silfrrekna alla*, ‘a broad-axe with silver inlay all over it’ by Earl Sigurd Hlödviðsson of Orkney.³⁵ Similarly, spearheads inlaid with silver and with copper coils around their sockets have been found in tenth-century graves at Valsgärde in Sweden.³⁶ Thus, although the Irish had a very developed vocabulary of their own for describing spears and did not feel any need to borrow many terms from Old Norse,³⁷ it does appear that their smiths were happy to adopt new styles of ironworking from the northern settlers. At the very least, Irish saga-writers were clearly happy to imply that they had done so.

In contrast to the situations with spears, a weapon that is invariably identified in Irish by its Norse-derived term was the bow. A beautifully preserved example of a Norse-style longbow was found along with an important collection of, arguably, eight Viking artefacts as well as with other Hiberno-Norse material in the excavation of Ballinderry no. 1 crannog in Westmeath. These have been the focus of a detailed study by Ruth Johnson. She deduced that

The number of fine Viking and Hiberno-Scandinavian artefacts recovered can be variously interpreted as the result of trade with Viking towns and settlements or of activities such as tribute or pillage. However, this writer would assert that there remains a slight possibility that the population at the site was a Viking or mixed Hiberno-Scandinavian group connected with Dublin, Limerick or one of the other Viking ports in the Irish Sea area. The artistic influences apparent on the material assemblage are typical of areas of Viking activity in the Irish Sea and should therefore be considered as part of this broader trend.³⁸

33 *Táin bó Fraích*, ed. W. Meid (Dublin, 1974), § 3. 34 Halpin, ‘The galloglach axe’, pls 1, 2.

35 *Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu: the saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue*, ed. P.G. Foote and R. Quirk (London, 1957), pp 18–19. 36 J. Graham-Campbell, *The Viking world* (London, 1980), p. 25. 37 For discussions of *ces* and *fraig*, however, see D. Ó Muirithe, *From the Viking word-hoard* (Dublin, 2010), pp 28, 57. 38 R. Johnson, ‘Ballinderry crannog no. 1: a reinterpretation’, *PRIA*, 99C (1999), 68–9.

The Ballinderry bow is particularly interesting given its length, which appears to mark it out from the relatively few other bows known from Britain and Ireland in this period.³⁹ It is worth noting, however, that in our Middle Irish texts the attested word for all such weapons is *boga* – a clear loanword from Old Norse *bogi*. This is despite the prevalence of the Latin word *sagitarium*, ‘archer’, which is attested in Ireland from the period of the ogham stones in the fifth to sixth centuries⁴⁰ and its concomitant loanword *saiget* (from Latin *sagitta*) for ‘arrow’ and the late Middle Irish *saigteóir* or Modern Irish *saighdiúir*, ‘archer’, ‘soldier’. The Annals of Tigernach describe how King Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair of Connacht, at his death in 1156, donated to the churches of Ireland *bogha 7 bolgshaighid 7 stabuill*, ‘bows and quivers and slings’, as part of his amassed treasure.⁴¹ Similarly, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* describes the mixed force of Dubliners, Leinstermen and visiting Scandinavians fighting at Clontarf: ‘Batar leosen saigitbuilc badha, barbarda 7 bogada blathi blabuidi’, ‘They had with them hideous barbarous bags of arrows and polished yellow-shining bows’.⁴²

The mixed linguistic environment of eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland is shown, however, by the fact that we do not find evidence of Old Norse *bogmadr*, ‘bowman’. Instead, Norse-derived *boga* is used in traditional formulae for groups of professionals as, for example, *lucht bóghadh*, ‘people of bows’, in the Book of Clanranald or, in a rare example with an Irish instrumental suffix, *bogatóir* in an Irish translation of Giraldus’ *Expugnatio Hiberniae*. In the Miscellaneous Irish Annals for the twelfth century, the commonest idiom is simply *bobha* or *bodhba*, ‘bows’ without identifying further the men who carried them, although those who followed John de Courcy are referred to as *soidhidoire*.⁴³ In the Annals of Tigernach under the year 1174, on the other hand, we find such men are instead described by the Romance loanword *áirseóiri*, while, surprisingly, in the Norman-French poem of the same period, *Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, we find the English word ‘archers’.⁴⁴

Norse or at any rate Germanic loanwords are, however, also used of other categories of Irish fighter in the high Middle Ages. In a lengthy account of the warriors in the tragic tale of *Togail bruidne da Derga*, the following were observed:

Atchonnarc triar n-aíli, téora máela forai. Tri lenti impu 7 tri broit hi forcepul. Sraigell i llaim cach ae. ‘Rusfetursa sin’ ol sé .i. Echdruim, Echriud, Echruáthar, trí marcaig ind rí sin .i. A thrí ritiri. Tri brathair iat. Tri meic Argatroin.

39 Halpin, *Weapons and warfare*, pp 37–44. 40 C. Swift, *Ogam stones and the earliest Irish Christians* (Maynooth, 1997), p. 91. 41 *AT*, p. 396. 42 *CGG*, pp 158–9. 43 Quin et al. (eds), *Dictionary of the Irish language*, B 134; W. Stokes, ‘The Irish abridgement of the *Expugnatio Hibernica*’, *EHR*, 20 (1905), 82, § 12; *AMisc.*, s.a. 1169, 1178. 44 *Deeds of the Normans*, pp 63, line 412; 70, line 695; 71, line 718; 101, lines 1885, 1890, 1894.

I saw three others – three bald heads on them. Three tunics around them and three cloaks in folds. A whip in the hand of each of them. ‘I know them’, he said. Echdruim, Echriud, Echruáthar, three horsemen of the king, i.e. the three *ritiri*. They are three brothers, the sons of Argatron.⁴⁵

The Norse word *riddari* is defined by Cleasby and Vigfússon as ‘a rider, horseman but especially a knight; the word, like most of those formed with reflexive *-ari*, is of foreign origin for the old Northmen or Scandinavians make no reference to horsemen in battle till the twelfth or thirteenth century’.⁴⁶ In English material, the word *ridda* is used in Ælfric’s life of King Oswald at the beginning of the eleventh century, but is worth noting that the Bosworth-Toller *Anglo-Saxon dictionary* distinguishes between this word and *ridere*, which it links to Icelandic. This last, the editors identify with ‘knight’ and note that it is attested for the first time at the end of the eleventh century.⁴⁷ The loanword into Irish above is first found in the early twelfth-century manuscript *Lebor na hUidre* (in the quotation from *Togail bruidne da Derga*) given above and it is also used in the Annals of Tigernach to describe a Dublin force of 1174 as well as Diarmait Mac Murchada’s mixed forces of 1167:

Diarmuid Mac Murchadha do techt a n-Erinn, ⁊ socraidí Gall ⁊ Saxanach ⁊ ridiredh leis, cor’ gab rígi Ua Cendsilaig arís.

Diarmait mac Murchada came into Ireland, and an army of Foreigners and Saxons and of *ritiri* with him, and he took back the kingdom of Uí Cheinnselaig.⁴⁸

In the Miscellaneous Irish Annals it is the commonly used idiom to describe warriors brought in under Anglo-Norman leaders in the 1160s and 1170s, and Ó hInnse translates the word as ‘knight’. Two interesting entries that may make such a translation questionable are in the account in the Miscellaneous Irish Annals of the siege of Dublin in 1171 and the subsequent arrival of Henry II:

Do fan O Ruairc ar faithci an baile beacan marcsluaigh ⁊ arna faicsin dona ridirib do buailidur fein asin mbaile amach eir O Ruairc ⁊ do marbadar Aedh mac Tigearnain h. Ruairc do maidh ar O Ruairc ⁊ an uair doconnadar na Gaeidil ag teitead do teitadur fein ⁊ do leanadar na ridiri iad ⁊ do marbadar moran dibh.

⁴⁵ *Lebor na hUidre: the Book of the Dun Cow*, ed. R.I. Best and O. Bergin (Dublin, 1929), p. 233, lines 7620–3. ⁴⁶ Cleasby and Vigfússon, *Icelandic-English dictionary*, p. 497. ⁴⁷ D. Whitelock (ed.), *Sweet’s Anglo-Saxon reader in prose and verse* (Oxford, 1967), p. 83, lines 169, 176; J. Bosworth and T.N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary* (Oxford, 1898), p. 795. ⁴⁸ *AT*, p. 420.

O'Ruairc remained on the green of the town with a small force of horse (*marcsluagh*), and when the [troop of] *ritire* saw him, they sallied forth from the town against him, killing Aodh, son of Tighearnán Ó Ruairc, and Ó Ruairc was defeated. When the Irish saw Ó Ruairc fleeing, they themselves fled and the [troop of] *ritire* pursued them, killing many of them.⁴⁹

Here we see a distinction being drawn between the *marcsluagh* or group of horsemen under Irish command and the *ritire* who are seen as characteristic of Dublin forces and invaders. When describing Henry II's troops, however, both terms are used:

Hanri mac na banimpiri ri Saxoan 7 diuic na Normointi 7 Ecitainie 7 Angon, do teach a nEirinn 5 c. ridiri 7 imurcaidh marcsluaigh 7 coisidhi.

Henry son of the empress, king of England and duke of Normandy, Aquitaine and Anjou, came to Ireland with five hundred 'knights' and numerous 'cavalry' and infantry.⁵⁰

Although these annals appear to have been compiled in the fifteenth century, this entry uses Henry's contemporary sobriquet, fitz Empress, and an abbreviated version of the titles used by Giraldus Cambrensis – 'Henricius rex Anglie, dux Normannie et Aquitannie et comes Andegavie', Henry king of England, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine and count of Anjou.⁵¹ It may be, therefore, that we should see some real distinction here in terms of equipment, training or even ethnic origin between the terms *marcsluagh* and *ritire*, though it is worth noting that both spurs and stirrups seem currently to appear first in eleventh-century Dublin.⁵² Certainly, the sources in which *ritire* is used of specifically Irish warriors appear to be generally late: one, rather entertaining, example is in the account of Cú Chulainn's training as a young man in Scotland. This text has been identified by Ruairi Ó hUiginn as a possibly fifteenth-century redaction of the second part of the Old Irish tale *Tochmarc emire* and characterized in the following terms:

Oileamhain Con Culainn would have appealed to audiences at the time of its redaction for in structure and content it is of a piece with the rambling episodic romantic tales that were so popular in the early modern period. Set in the wonderland of the 'eastern world' it is replete with adventure, love and violence and encounters with Amazonian viragos and various supernatural beings.⁵³

49 *AMisc.*, s.a. 1171. 50 *Ibid.*, s.a. 1172. 51 *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. and trans. A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), p. 26.

52 P.F. Wallace, 'The use of iron in Viking Dublin' in M. Ryan (ed.), *Irish antiquities: essays in memory of Joseph Raftery* (Dublin, 1998), p. 217. 53 W. Stokes, 'The training of Cúchulainn',

The fact that Cú Chulainn and his companions are referred to throughout this highly chivalric text as *ritiri*, therefore, probably does not imply that the word was widely used of Irish warriors in the early period.

Another loanword used of warriors in high medieval Ireland is *suaitrech* or *suartlech*, apparently derived from Norse *svartleggja*, ‘black stalk’ or ‘black leg’. According to Cleasby and Vigfússon this is an idiom used to describe a battleaxe, but in Irish contexts the word is clearly associated with humans. Thus the Annals of Inisfallen under the year 972 state:

Loscad tige Dubchróin Hui Longgacháin i torchair lxx 7 indarba suaittrech 7 na trí cáne do dénum a comarle degdóene Muman .i. Mathgamain 7 Foelan 7 mc Brain.

The burning of the house of Dubchrón Ua Longacháin in which seventy fell and the banishment of *suaitrig* and the making of the three laws by the counsel of the nobles of Munster, that is Mathgamain and Faelan and the son of Bran.⁵⁴

It also occurs in more literary contexts such as *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* or *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, where it is specifically associated with foreigners living as billeted soldiers in Irish houses:

*Maer for cach baili 7 suartleach cach tigi connach rabi commuis ic duni d'fheraib Érend cet blegon a bó na comeis liní oen chirci dugaib do din, no do digrais da rinser no domancairt acht a marthain do maeir no do reachtaire no do tsuartleach gaill.*⁵⁵

A *maer* over every *baile* and a *súartlech* in every house so that none of the men of Ireland had power to give the milk of his cow nor as much as the clutch of eggs of one hen in succour, or in kindness to an aged man or to a friend but was forced to preserve them for the *maer* or the steward or the foreign *suartleach*.

Given the Old Norse original, it is possible that this word is a synonym for a foot soldier who deploys a battleaxe as his main weapon. An alternative explanation, however, is that it literally means a black-legged man and refers to someone wearing mail on his legs. In that context, it is interesting that yet another Old Norse loanword is *brók*, which is translated as ‘breeches’ but is adopted into Irish as *bróc*, where, in Modern Irish, it is normally understood as ‘shoe’. Giraldus Cambrensis states that twelfth-century Irishmen wore *braccis caligatis seu caligis braccatis*, ‘woollen trousers that are also boots or boots that are at the same time trousers’.⁵⁶

Revue Celtique, 29 (1908), 109–47; R. Ó hUiginn, ‘Oileamhain Con Culainn: Cú Chulainn’s training’, *Emania*, 19 (2002), 52. ⁵⁴ *AI*, s.a. 972. ⁵⁵ *CGG*, pp 47–50; *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, p. 1. ⁵⁶ Gerald of Wales, *History and topography*, p. 101; O’Meara (ed.), ‘Text of the

According to *Táin bó Fraích*, such garments could be of metal and worn by mounted Irish warriors when travelling to a betrothal party:

Coíca claideb n-órduirn leo 7 gabor bogglas fó shuidi cech fhir 7 beilge óir friu. Máelland arggait co clucíniu óir fo brágit cech eich. Coíca acraann corcra co snáthaib argait estib co síblaib óir 7 argait 7 co cendmílaib. Coíca echlasc findruine co mbaccán órda for cinn cech áe 7 secht mílchoin i slabradiab argait 7 ubull n-óir eter cech n-áe. Bróca crédumai impu.

Fifty gold-hilted swords they had and a light grey horse under the seat of every man with bridle bits of gold on them. A silver chain with little bells of gold under the throat of every horse. Fifty saddle-cloths of purple with threads of silver through them and animal-headed buckles of gold and silver. Fifty riding whips of pale gold with a little hook of gold on the head of each of them and seven hunting hounds on silver chains with a golden apple between each of them. Copper *bróca* on them.⁵⁷

These warriors had been equipped by women from the Sid and clearly their equipment was, in the popular phrase, ‘out of this world’. As a result, it remains unclear whether we should consider the suggestion that *bróca* could be made of metal in the early Middle Irish period as fanciful or not, but the possibility is clearly there.

Other categories of military men were also described by Norse loanwords in Irish sources. So in *In cath Catharda*, the general Pompey deploys various officials in order to gather together his forces:

Ro curit annsin bolsairedha 7 callairedha 7 ardmair 7 armainn 7 aes furocra o Poimp for tossachaib na sliged d'imfostadh 7 d'imfuireach na sluag re taisbenad a socraiti 7 re corugud a cath 7 re h-airem a m-buiden 7 re h-ordugud a n-imtechtae.

Then Pompey put *bolsairedha* and *callairedha* and *ardmair* and *armainn* and summoners at the beginnings of the roads to stop and to delay the hosts in order to review their force and array their battalions and count their troops and order their march.⁵⁸

Bolsaire is a rare word and the editors of the *Dictionary of the Irish language* link it, somewhat dubiously, to Latin *pulsator* or bell-ringer. In fact, in the *Medieval Latin word-list from British and Irish sources*, this word is used of a plaintiff in a legal case in a source of 1114 and of ‘one who attacks’, c.1125.⁵⁹ *Ard-máer* is an

first recension’, 162. 57 *Táin bó Fraích*, p. 2 (trans. present author). 58 ‘In cath Catharda’, pp 360–1, lines 4849–53. 59 J.H. Baxter and C. Johnson, *Medieval Latin word-list from British and Irish sources* (London, 1934).

Irish word that, along with the related *mor-maer*, is used in the twelfth century of royal officials whose ‘main function seems to have been to lead the men of the province in war and to enforce the king’s justice’.⁶⁰ A very similar meaning is attached to Norse *ár-maðr*, which gave rise to Irish *ármann*. The Norse original is defined by Cleasby and Vigfússon as ‘a steward, especially of royal estates in Scandinavia, also of earls’ estates in Orkney: policemen and tax gatherers, often of low birth’. The Irish loanword is defined as an officer or official, often being cited in military contexts, but in at least one example is used of residents of Dublin – Iohannes Orcach (of Orkney?) and Turcaill, *da aramann Atha Cliath*.⁶¹

The fourth role mentioned here is that of the *callaire*, identified with Old Norse *kallari*, which is defined by Cleasby and Vigfússon as ‘a crier, herald or as a law term, a kind of beadle or town clerk’. A Middle Irish poem identifies this man with duties in the ale-house and with the native words *rechtaire* – steward or law-enforcer and *rannaire*, ‘distributor of food’ – a role normally associated with attendants at feasts:

Ba rechtaire co rochrúais / cíarbo rannaire Osraige / ba callaire coirmthige.

He was a steward right severe; though he was the butler of Osraige, he was the *callaire* of the ale-house.⁶²

In the late Middle Irish death tale *Aided Diarmada meic Fergusa*, *callaire* is used to gloss the phrase *gilla in gáí* – the spear-bearer. The context is one where Diarmait’s household is perambulating through his domains as follows:

Bái tra cáin 7 smacht 7 recht Diarmata fó Erinn co coitchenn. Bátar a maeir 7 a rechtaireda 7 a fhianna for coinnmedh sechnón Erenn. Lotar i crích Connacht in inbaid sin máir 7 baccláim 7 callaire in rígh i mailli fris 7 is éisdéin no biodh ic irfhóera rompo do’n tigh dia téighdís for oedhoigheacht ... marbus gilla in gáí .i. in callaire.

Diarmait’s tribute and discipline and law prevailed in Ireland generally; his *maeir* [plural of *maer*] and his *rechtaireda* [plural of *rechtaire*] and his regular soldiers were billeted throughout Ireland. At this particular time, the king’s *maeir* and his *baccláim* [servants or possibly clerical administrators?] accompanied him into Connacht; and the king’s *callaire* together with him; it was he who used to announce them in advance at any house to which they arrived in quest of hospitality ... Then anger took hold of Áed and he slew the spear-bearer, that is the *callaire*.⁶³

60 A. Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba, 789–1070* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp 342–4. 61 *AMisc.*, s.a. 1171. 62 *The metrical Dindshenchas*, pt 4: *Text, translation and commentary*, ed. and trans. E. Gwynn (Dublin, 1991), pp 218–19. 63 S.H. O’Grady (ed. and trans.), *Silva Gadelica: a collection of tales in Irish, with extracts illustrating persons and places*, 2 vols (London, 1892), i,

Clearly all these men – the *ármann*, the *ard-máer* and the *callaire* – are seen as officials working for a higher authority such as a king. They had duties that encompassed both peace and war and that involved the exercise of authority over large numbers of lesser subjects. They represent the growing political power of the high medieval Irish kings and it is particularly interesting that the words by which they were known in Irish were often Norse rather than Gaelic, Norman-French or English in origin.

A final character in the cast of military men operating in Ireland whose roles are described by Old Norse loanwords is the *stiúrusmann* or steersman. We have seen above that in his capacity as controller of the rudder of large warships, such a word could be used as a metaphor for a commander of an army. In the eleventh-century Fragmentary Annals of Ireland we come across one such man in charge of a Scandinavian boat:

Tainig dna long lánluath an giolla óig reimraidhte a énar résna longoibh oile, go ttarlattar na da loing d'aighid it aighid, go n-ebheart stiurusman na loinge Lochlannaighe: 'Sibh-si a fhiura', ar sé, 'ga tír asa ttangabhair ar an muir-si? An ra sidh tangabhair nó an rá cogadh?' As é fregra tugattar na Danair fair-sin: fross romhór do shaighdibh fotha.

Then the swift ship of the young man who was mentioned before came alone in front of the other ships until the two ships met face to face and the *stiurusmann* of the ship of the Lochlannaig spoke: 'You, men', he said, 'from what country have you come from on to this sea? Do you come for peace or for war?' This is the answer that the Danes gave him: a great shower of arrows upon them.⁶⁴

In the Annals of Inisfallen under the year 1127, however, the word is used of local Irishmen in charge of ships belonging to the kingdoms surrounding the Shannon estuary:

Coblach la mac ind Fhinnshúilig U Murcertaig a hucht maic Ruadrí co Inis Catig coro brisisset araill do longgaib Matgamna U Conchobuir Ciaraige 7 co raguib Ua Conchubuir Corcu Mruad luing dibsom 7 cora marb a forind im Chathal Crobderg Ua Domnaill, mac rig Ua nEchach 7 im Senan mac Gollsci imma stirasmund.

A fleet was brought by the son of In Finnshúilech [the Bright-eyed] Ua Muirchertaig to Scattery Island on behalf of Ruaidrí's son [Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht] and they wrecked some of the ships of Mathgamain Ua Conchobuir Chiarraige [from north Kerry]. And Ua

Conchobuir of Corcu Modruad [north-west Clare] captured one of their ships and killed its crew including Cathal Crobderg Ua Domnaill, son of the king of Uí Echach [the Ivaha peninsula in west Cork] and Senán son of Gollsci, their *stiúrusmann*.⁶⁵

The ships that such men were involved in steering were clearly of Norse design, for in addition to the *stiúrusmann* the details of their construction were also described by Old Norse loanwords such as *þopta*, defined by Cleasby and Vigfússon as ‘rowing bench’ and *þili* or ‘plank partition’:

Do luingetar sluagh clainni gegdha glan Chais a longuibh na Lochlannaigh gur thoitset ar topthaibh ⁊ ar tiltibh ⁊ ar trenramhaibh na tarblong ... rodibraiced cu athlum ona Eirenchaibh teda caela cnaibrighne tar leabarcorraibh na long Lochlannach ar daigh nach scuchdais o cheli ⁊ rodibraiced ona Lochlannchaib slabrada garba glaisiarainn tar saeirchorraibh a sithlongsom ⁊ ro coraigheadh ider na curadaib cliatha crannblaithi ceinnghera do shleaguibh sithrighne sairneimnecha ⁊ do threicetar a sdiurasmainn sdiuraighechta ⁊ do eirgedar a bhfoirne le ramhadhuibh um rigborduibh a ruadhlóng gur gabsat breisim barbardha ar a cheli.

The army of the active and famous families of Dál Cais leapt into the ships of the Lochlannaigh [Norsemen] so that they fell upon the row-benches (*tophta*) and planks (*tili*) and strong oars of the mighty [literally ‘bull’] ships ... The Irishmen quickly flung narrow ropes of hemp over the long prows of the ships of the Lochlannaigh in order that they might not be separated from each other. The Lochlannaigh then flung rough chains of grey iron over the stately prows of their vessels. There were arranged between the heroes, smooth-shafted, sharp-pointed rows of long, stout, most venomous spears. Their *stiúrusmenn* left off steering and their crews arose with the oars around the splendid sides of their strong ships and they raised a barbarous uproar against each other.⁶⁶

A similar account is given in *In cath Catharda*, but in the latter a distinction is carefully drawn between the leader of the fleet and the individual helmsman:

O ’tcondairc in taisech toghaidhi .i .Brutus in n-abairt sin fora m-batar longa na Masilecdha cuigi ⁊ uadh, ro gabh for acallaim a stiurasmainn, ⁊ ro ráidh ris slis a luingi do córugud re bruinnedhaibh long na Masilecdha, ⁊ do róine in stiurasmann amhlaid sin, ⁊ ro coirighedh na longa fá comnesa dóibh in innus cétna.

⁶⁵ *AI*, s.a. 1127. ⁶⁶ *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, p. 42, §§ 71–2 and p. 100 (with minor modernizations by present author).

When the chosen chieftain (*toísech*), Brutus, saw the manner in which the ships of the Massilians were [coming] to him and [retreating] from him, he began to hold speech with his *stiúrusmann*, and told him to lay the side of his ship against the prows of the ships of the Massilians. The *stiúrusmann* did thus, and the ships that were nearest were arrayed in like manner.⁶⁷

I have suggested elsewhere that the method of manning and equipping ships in twelfth-century Ireland was a form of *laídeng* – the Irish form of the Old Norse word *leidangr*, which was used to denote a ship levy in eleventh-century and later sources from Scandinavia. The evidence of *Cogadh* and *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*, as well as a third text, *Lebor na cert*, shows us a system whereby a king who gives ships to his coastal subordinates is entitled to demand their allegiance as ship commanders. They in turn reward their followers with a percentage of whatever loot is raised as a consequence of the campaign. The texts indicate that the coastal kingdoms awarded such vessels included not only Scandinavian settlements such as Waterford but also native Irish kingdoms such as the Corcu Duibne of Dingle, the Corcu Baiscinn of Clare and the north-eastern kingdoms of Down and Antrim.⁶⁸

One final and evocative source can be considered. A key feature of early Irish literature was the production of poetry by vernacular poets. This included a considerable quantity of praise-poetry directed towards the glorification of one's patron. Equally, however, the poets could be directed to produce the exact opposite, that is to say curse-poetry or satires. This material is not so well known to modern scholarship as the praise poetry – for obvious reasons, it was less likely to be preserved. Middle Irish poets did, however, excerpt a certain amount of such material to illustrate various poetic metres and this has been the subject of recent study by Roisín McLaughlin. Among the verses she published we find one that uses two Norse loanwords – *stiúir* from Norse *styri*, 'rudder' and our old friend *búaile*:

Goll Mena mún cromgabair cerc i cill crann eidnénach
Bert fhleda for lomgabail linn deidblénach drolmánach
Brissiud stúaige ic stocairecht stiúir d'fhid lim long mallrámach
Cáinte buaile ic brocairecht ben chamlámach chomdálach.

Goll of Men, piss of a crooked goat, a hen in a church, an ivy-covered tree, a load for a feast carried on a bare [grazed] fork, weak ale on the handles of a vat. Breaking the handle [of a trumpet] while trumpeting; a softwood

67 'In cath Catharda', pp 150–3, esp. lines 1980–5. 68 C. Swift, 'Royal fleets in Viking Ireland: the evidence of *Lebor na cert*' in J. Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home: proceedings of a conference on Viking-period settlement, at Cardiff, July 2001* (Leeds, 2004), pp 189–206.

rudder of slow-rowing ships. A [female] satirist of the *búaile* acting like a badger, a crooked-handed gregarious woman.⁶⁹

Here we find Norse loanwords embedded in the local vernacular, while the imagery involved appears quintessentially Norse. No steering material has survived from the Skuldelev ships or from Dublin, but a study of the woods used in the Hedeby vessels has indicated that soft woods were used for 'low-budget boatbuilding', except when their pliable nature had structural advantages as in creating treenails, rowlocks, cleats and so forth.⁷⁰ A rudder that bends, however, is of very little use in steering a ship and therein (presumably) lies the insult.

To conclude, this essay drew its inspiration from a study of Viking and Hiberno-Norse weaponry in Ireland that indicated that military equipment from the later tenth century parallels that found elsewhere in northern Europe and dating from the same time. This was contrasted with the conclusions of scholars such as Fellows-Jensen who suggested that there were few loanwords from Norse into Irish and thus little indication for cultural interchange. It is the contention of this essay that a study that looks at Norse loanwords in their Middle Irish context reveals far more of the varied and complex interactions that went to make up Hiberno-Scandinavian society. Donnchadh Ó Corráin has written:

Cogad [*Gáedhel re Gallaibh*] is attractive because it is, besides a work of the imagination, a learned piece on high politics that has as its literary frame of reference scripture and the contemporary translations and adaptations from the Latin classics. It is no accident that these very texts (*Cath catharda*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, *Geschichte von Philipp und Alexander*) and the texts that we know belong to the eleventh and twelfth centuries (*Cath Maige Léna*, *Passions and homilies from the Leabhar Breac*, *Cath Ruis na Ríg*, *Cath Finntrága* etc.) are good sources for Old Norse loan-words in Irish. But it is more. It is a work of chivalry: enemies are brave and courageous, noble and worthy opponents. It celebrates the daring and heroism of a warlike aristocracy whose values are very like those of their European contemporaries.⁷¹

Heroics are always so much more palatable for the participants when those taking part in them are armed to the best contemporary standards.

⁶⁹ R. McLaughlin (ed.), *Early Irish satire* (Dublin, 2008), pp 160–1, § 67. ⁷⁰ O. Crumlin-Pedersen, *Viking-Age ships and shipbuilding in Hedeby/Haithabu and Schleswig* (Schleswig and Roskilde, 1997), pp 179–87. ⁷¹ D. Ó Corráin, 'Old Norse and medieval Irish: bilingualism in Viking-Age Dublin' in J. Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world: studies in honour of Howard B. Clarke* (Dublin, 2009), p. 66.

Irish Sea identities and interconnections during the Viking Age

DAVID GRIFFITHS

Vikings dominate our modern historical consciousness of the period 790–1100. In Ireland and Britain, this is seen quintessentially as the age of sudden, violent seaborne attacks by Scandinavian raiders, followed by invasion and the brutalization and enslavement of native inhabitants, before moving on to religious conversion, urbanization, landed wealth and political power. Spectacular pagan grave assemblages from cemeteries such as those found at Kilmainham and Islandbridge (Dublin) or Cumwhitton (Cumbria) attest to the dominance of warlike incomers whose primary cultural references reached back to Hordaland, Rogaland, Viken and Jutland. Silver hoards give us a dramatic impression of the wealth, power and overseas connections of the invaders. The Irish Sea has often been described as a ‘Viking lake’ by commentators who would see this small, semi-inland sea as a maritime ‘cultural province’ of Scandinavian Viking dominance, surrounded by a strategic network of interlinked Viking settlements and swept by trading and war-fleets that reduced land-bound native populations to a state of fearful vassalage. So much is thus widely perceived. As a relatively attractive, if oversimplistic picture, this historical scenario is pervasive in all forms of popular and much academic literature. So dominant has it become, for example, that Irish influences in Britain from 800 onwards are almost unquestioningly attributed to a Viking or Hiberno-Norse presence. The question of continuing Insular contacts between Ireland, Anglo-Saxon England, Wales and Scotland during this period is a theme less often explored.

To be a ‘Viking’ was more akin to a reputation or an occupation than an innate biological status. Few, if any, at the time would even have identified themselves as such: kin and regional affinities were more important than a vague catch-all term, which almost certainly has far more meaning today than it had a millennium ago. We now understand that Vikings were not exponents of a monolithic, alien culture, but were a multiplicity of small interest groups, which interacted with Irish and British societies on a varied and circumstantial basis, often showing considerable aptitude for rapid assimilation. Yet Scandinavian-derived traits persisted, often echoing pagan stories and motifs, in art, inscriptions and material culture. Britain and Ireland engaged in intensive cultural contact prior to 790, sharing ideas, technologies and populations. Hybridity between Scandinavian and native cultures is a complex and

fascinating area of study, which is now being reshaped by an increasing flow of isotopic data from burial remains, giving an insight into individual geographical origins. This essay seeks to highlight and discuss a number of uncertainties about cultural and ethnic definitions, which are raised by archaeological, historical and toponymic evidence, and to emphasize that a nuanced picture, taking account of regional and historical diversity, is essential to understanding this period.

THE SCALE AND EXTENT OF THE SCANDINAVIAN PRESENCE

There was undoubtedly an intrusive Scandinavian population element in Ireland and western Britain in the Viking Age. There was a brief period of pagan influence on burial rites, art and culture, which probably lasted until around the mid-tenth century, and the Old Norse language as denoted by runic epigraphs and place-names became prevalent in localized areas. Historical accounts may be coloured and biased, but leave no doubt that 'Northmen', 'Gentiles' or 'Foreigners' were widely present as important and often leading actors in the recorded events of the period (even if active political intervention coming directly from Scandinavia itself was extremely rare). Notwithstanding a ready acceptance of the undoubted truth of there having been an influential Scandinavian diaspora in western Britain and Ireland, we remain subject to misconceptions and considerable uncertainty as to its size, depth and extent in relation to existing populations. Its cultural and political coherence is also a matter of debate. Intersections of inference from paganism, Christianity, place-names, traded objects, stylistic expression, to language, political tradition and biological origins form a complex arena from which to draw simplistic generalized conclusions as to the character of the region and period under study. None of these gives unambiguous messages as to the relative weight in number, or the continued predominance, of Scandinavian settlers.

A tradition of interpreting Insular material with reference to Scandinavian museum collections began with the visit of J.J.A. Worsaae to Ireland in 1846–7, and continued, via Haakon Shetelig's edited series of Viking antiquities volumes in the mid-twentieth century,¹ to shape and affect much post-war and relatively modern scholarship. Generally, the owners and wearers of Viking-styled personal ornament were assumed to be unambiguously Scandinavian. The 'culture historical' tradition of archaeological scholarship, with its emphasis on migration and the transmission of fixed national traditions of material culture, has arguably drawn too-stark distinctions between population groups in Viking-Age Britain and Ireland. There has been a change in this picture since 2000. Recent

¹ J.J.A. Worsaae, *An account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1852); S. Grieg, *Viking antiquities in Scotland* (Oslo, 1940); J. Bøe, *Norse antiquities in Ireland* (Oslo, 1940).

scholarship has laid emphasis on transmuted ethnic identity, changing allegiances and acculturation, producing hybrid cultures and groupings.²

In demographic terms, the number of Scandinavian settlers is hard to put a precise figure upon. Recent DNA mapping studies have attracted considerable publicity, but remain at an early stage of resolution. DNA studies of modern populations³ point towards up to 50 per cent of Y-chromosome in selected male samples in north-west England (with medieval-sourced surnames) having Norse ancestry. A study of Irish males with medieval-sourced surnames found little evidence of Norse DNA linkage, at most pointing to only a small number of intrusive Scandinavian males as ancestral to the current Irish population.⁴ Iceland (which could be seen as an historical reflector of conditions in the western British Isles) suggests an emphasis on Scandinavian descent in the male line, whereas Icelandic mitochondrial DNA data suggest a more 'Celtic' dominated female biological lineage.⁵ Particularly in societies tolerant of polygamy, far fewer individual males are necessary to drive population expansion in relation to numbers of females. Projected proportions of males of Scandinavian descent in the general medieval population in the Irish Sea region are arguably therefore potentially significant but not overwhelming, and are therefore not necessarily indicative of a full-blown mass migration of families as opposed to a more select number of individuals with high reproductive potential. Present indications also suggest that most pre-modern settlers whose direct bloodlines originated in Scandinavia were male, socially powerful and in many cases probably took wives from local populations in Ireland and Britain. What this type of data, from males or females, cannot tell us is precisely when or how suddenly these influences appeared in the ancestry of the modern population, nor whether the innate biology was accompanied by related cultural behaviours.

So far, relatively few analyses of Viking-Age skeletal materials for biological origin from Ireland or western Britain have been published. Samples from four young males found in weapon graves excavated on the south side of the Poddle pool at South Great George's Street, Dublin, excavated in 2003–4, have been subjected to oxygen isotope analysis, which can give an indication of the mineral

2 C. Etchingam, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles, the Insular Viking zone', *Peritia*, 15 (2001), 145–87; C. Downham, "'Hiberno-Norwegians" and "Anglo-Danes": anachronistic ethnicities in Viking-Age England', *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 19 (2009), 139–69; D. Griffiths, 'Settlement and acculturation in the Irish Sea region' in J. Hines et al. (eds), *Land, sea and home: proceedings of a conference on Viking-period settlement* (Leeds, 2004), pp 125–38; D. Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea: conflict and assimilation, AD790–1050* (Stroud, 2010).

3 G.R. Bowden et al., 'Excavating past population structures by surname-based sampling: the genetic legacy of the Vikings in northwest England', *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, 25:2 (2008), 301–9, summarized in S. Harding et al., 'Looking for Vikings in north-west England', *British Archaeology*, 103 (2008), 22–5.

4 B. McEvoy et al., 'The scale and nature of Viking settlement in Ireland from Y chromosome admixture analysis', *European Journal of Human Genetics*, 14 (2006), 1288–94.

5 A. Helgason et al., 'mtDNA and the origin of the Icelanders: deciphering signals of recent population history', *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 66

content of water intake during childhood (and hence by implication place of origin). The results are not directly indicative of location, but suggest that two of the individuals were probably from northern Europe or Scandinavia, whereas the other two are more likely to have originated somewhere in the northern or western British Isles, perhaps in Atlantic Scotland.⁶ This could fit well with second- or third-generation Vikings coming from Orkney, perhaps, but the sample is small and the case still provisional. More perplexing are the apparently very early radiocarbon dates for these burials, which along with two others, from Great Ship Street and Golden Lane, all cluster in the late eighth or early ninth centuries, pre-dating the historical foundation of Dublin by at least half a century. There are possible explanations for this, in that radiocarbon dates taken from humans or animals with a strongly marine-derived diet can give an artificially early determination (the 'marine reservoir effect'), but further work on more burials is required to clarify whether this is an isolated or generalized phenomenon.

There are other options for extending this work, not just on the few human remains from furnished burials (most of these were antiquarian discoveries and the bones and teeth do not survive), but also on the more numerous human remains from unfurnished cemeteries. Just as not all individuals buried in pagan Viking style may have been of Scandinavian biological origin, surely some Scandinavian-descended people must have crossed sufficiently into native cultures to have been accorded local burial rites, perhaps especially after the Christian conversion period of the mid- to late tenth century. The markedly fewer high-status females buried in furnished graves at Cumwhiton, Kilmainham or Finglas may have been Scandinavian by birth, or they may have derived their social, ethnic and religious status from their marriages. In the tiny number of cases where levels of skeletal preservation make it possible, future researches on their bone collagen may reveal their origins. It is also the case that isotopic analyses of pre-Viking burials of Christian rite have so far produced surprisingly eclectic results with regard to geographical origin, such as where a sixth- to eighth-century Manx cemetery produced evidence that those buried there came from Scotland, Northumbria, Wales and Ireland.⁷ Such research is now confirming that so-called 'native' populations were far from biologically uniform or isolated to their localities, meaning that the potential for clear contrast with incoming populations is likely to be reduced.

Perhaps the most convincing archaeological evidence for direct contact between Scandinavia and the Irish Sea region is the large number of imported objects of Irish or British manufacture (often valuable ecclesiastical objects, but

(2000), 999–1016. 6 L. Simpson, 'Viking warrior burials in Dublin: is this the *longphort*?' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VI: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin symposium 2004* (Dublin, 2005), pp 11–62. 7 K.A. Hemer, 'A bioarchaeological study of yhr human remains from the early medieval cemetery of Cronk Keillane', *Proceedings of the Isle of Man*

also more commonplace ones such as ringed pins), which are found in ninth- and tenth-century pagan graves in Norway, Denmark and in the Mälaren region of Sweden,⁸ together with comparable material found in trading settlements such as Kaupang, Hedeby and Ribe.⁹ Considering that the Irish and the English in particular were capable of seaborne travel, that they are known to have had fleets, and that their ecclesiastical cultures had considerable Mediterranean contacts, there has been hardly any suggestion that some of the Insular material in Scandinavia could have been brought there by enterprising traders from Britain and Ireland, rather than as ‘booty’ from Viking raiding expeditions. Conversely, objects found in the Irish Sea region that were manufactured in Scandinavia include oval brooches, amber and glass beads, and iron weapons such as swords and spearheads. Kufic coins and materials such as steatite, walrus ivory and jet – all of which were found in small quantities in Dublin – also indicate trading contact with the Viking world, but not necessarily that their eventual and final owners were Scandinavian by origin. Many of these objects could have been traded on by middlemen from intermediate markets in Scandinavia itself, Britain or continental Europe.

An eclectic range of origins and convergences is typical of contemporary hoards. Hoarding of precious metals (largely silver) including coins, hacksilver, ingots and arm-rings, proliferated in the Viking Age in both Ireland and Britain. The vast Cuerdale hoard, dated to around 905–10, which was found in 1840 on the bank of the River Ribble (Lancashire), contains evidence of the extraordinary extent of contemporary trading contacts. Coins from England and Francia were accompanied by dirhems from Samarkand and Baghdad, and a huge range of hacksilver.¹⁰ Cuerdale’s contents are exceptionally varied and numerous, yet only a small proportion of the hoard is of direct Scandinavian provenance. A similar picture is conveyed by very recent hoard discoveries of broadly contemporary material at Silverdale (Lancashire) and Huxley (Cheshire). John Sheehan’s work on the Irish hoards, particularly the series of Hiberno-Viking arm-ring types exemplified by the Huxley hoard, tells us that much of the silver found in Irish Viking-Age hoards was in native, not Viking, ownership.¹¹

Most of the Scandinavian-made oval brooches and weapons found in Ireland, the Isle of Man and western Britain come from furnished pagan graves. In many cases they were already rather old when deposited and were accompanied by

Natural History and Antiquarian Society, 12:3 (2009), 469–86. 8 E. Wamers, ‘Insular finds in Viking-Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway’ in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 37–72. 9 D. Skre, ‘The development of urbanism in Scandinavia’ in S. Brink and N. Price (eds), *The Viking world* (London, 2008), pp 83–93. 10 J. Graham-Campbell, *The Cuerdale hoard and related Viking-Age silver and gold from Britain and Ireland in the British Museum* (London, 2011). 11 J. Sheehan, ‘The form and structure of Viking-Age silver hoards: the evidence from Ireland’ in J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (eds), *Silver economy in the Viking Age* (Walnut Creek,

newer and smaller 'hybrid' objects of more local manufacture such as ringed pins, buckles and strap terminals that provide a closer match to the dates of the inhumations. Moreover, the Scandinavian sword types found in Irish Sea furnished graves (such as Petersen Types E, H and I) are by no means predominant in relation to other types, which are of Anglo-Saxon (for example, Type L) or Frankish manufacture (such as Type K). Added to the mixed influences are weapon styles, such as conical shield bosses, which are an entirely new Irish or Irish Sea innovation.¹² The three Viking graves in the Isle of Man excavated by Gerhard Bersu between 1944 and 1947¹³ also contain surprisingly few direct references to Scandinavia. The most elaborate of these burials, the boat burial at Balladoole, lacks Scandinavian-made weapons but includes Frankish-made metalwork,¹⁴ perhaps echoing and emphasizing ninth-century Viking campaigns on the Seine or Loire rather than direct links to a Scandinavian homeland. Similarly, the 'pagan lady' grave excavated at Peel Castle in 1984, a uniquely elaborately furnished grave in the context of that cemetery, lacks Scandinavian allusions except possibly for the curious iron 'cooking spit',¹⁵ which has been reinterpreted as a sorceress's staff, combined with some other objects from the grave with an apparently magical or amuletic quality.¹⁶ Despite these caveats, in almost all cases, authors attribute the ownership of assemblages of such objects not to locals but to Vikings.

The symbolism of furnished burial and its spiritual and ancestral connection to the ceremonial legitimization of power is a theme well-known in Scandinavian research.¹⁷ The Tynwald mound on the Isle of Man is perhaps the most obvious example of such a site in the Irish Sea region, but the former Thingmount in Dublin near the church of St Mary de Hogges is another good case in point.¹⁸ Assembly sites from Little Langdale, Cumbria, to places with Thingwall names on opposing sides of the River Mersey in West Derby and Wirral make use of constructed mounds as focal points in the landscape.¹⁹ It is relatively easy to point to Viking-world parallels such as Jelling and Old Uppsala. It is not necessary, however, to find exclusively Scandinavian inspiration for this tradition. Equally influential is the probable influence of the Irish and Scottish

CA, 2007), pp 149–62. ¹² S.H. Harrison, 'Viking graves and grave-goods in Ireland' in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), pp 61–75. ¹³ G. Bersu and D.M. Wilson, *Three Viking graves in the Isle of Man* (London, 1966). ¹⁴ G. Thomas, 'Carolingian culture in the North Sea world: rethinking the cultural dynamics of personal adornment in Viking-Age England', *European Journal of Archaeology*, 15:3 (2012), 486–518. ¹⁵ J.A. Graham-Campbell, 'Tenth-century graves: the Viking-Age artefacts and their significance' in D. Freke (ed.), *Excavations on St Patrick's Isle, Peel, Isle of Man, 1982–88: prehistoric, Viking, medieval and later* (Liverpool, 2002), pp 83–98. ¹⁶ N.S. Price, *The Viking way, religion and war in late Iron Age Scandinavia* (Uppsala, 2002), pp 160–6. ¹⁷ D. Skre, 'Haug og grav. Hva betyr gravhaugene?' in A. Christensson et al. (eds), *Middelalderens symboler* (Bergen, 1997), pp 37–52. ¹⁸ R. Ó Floinn, 'The archaeology of the early Viking Age in Ireland' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 131–65. ¹⁹ A. Pantos and S. Semple (eds), *Assembly*

royal and local assembly sites,²⁰ such as Clogher, Tara and Navan, and their Dalriadic equivalents such as Dunadd. Prominent ceremonial arenas, burial mounds of ancestral power and linked processional avenues, with designated areas for witnesses, prisoners and impressive herds of cattle and horses, would have formed a powerful model that may have influenced considerably the rapidly acculturating Scandinavian settlers. The theatre of these occasions, equipped and indeed enabled by objects such as weaponry and excessively decorated personal ornaments, may have become more embedded in the ceremonial life of hybrid Insular culture than we have so far given credit for.

Place-names have often been quoted as a means of gauging the prevalence of Norse naming habits and therefore the relative predominance of Norse settlers versus the rest. These also present problems. The marked regional contrast in their density suggests strongly that place-names are giving us a warped and disproportionate geographical impression of the extent of Scandinavian settlement around the Irish Sea. Scandinavian topographical terms became adopted as part of the ongoing development of local dialects, particularly in English. In areas such as Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria, and also coastal Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire where English was dominant, there is mostly no guarantee that an apparently Scandinavian or part-Scandinavian place-name need necessarily date to the period before 1100 or even 1150. Indeed, some clusters of apparently 'Viking' place-names are known to date to the twelfth century or later and are a result of plantations of settlers from central and eastern England where such naming habits were already ingrained.²¹

This factor could also affect minor names, such as field-names, which are sometimes argued to be markers of the density of Scandinavian speakers. Domesday Book provides a proven historical case for some place-names having existed in 1066–86, but for the Irish Sea region it covers only Cheshire and parts of central Lancashire (then recorded as extended portions of Yorkshire, echoing the ancient extent of Northumbria west of the Pennines), leaving large swathes of the region's place-names undocumented until much later in the medieval period. In Ireland, there are only one or two possibly Scandinavian hybrid habitative place-names in the immediate hinterland of Dublin, where they might have been considered highly likely to have existed as outliers of the Viking-dominated tenth- and eleventh-century town.²² The rest of Ireland is near bereft

places and practices in medieval Europe (Dublin, 2004). ²⁰ For a wider study, see E. FitzPatrick, *Royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland, c.1100–1600* (Woodbridge, 2004). ²¹ G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in the north-west* (Copenhagen, 1985); B.K. Roberts, 'Late -by names in the Eden valley, Cumbria', *Nomina*, 13 (1990), 25–40. ²² J. Bradley, 'Some reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin during the ninth century' in J. Bradley et al. (eds), *Dublin in the medieval world: studies in honour of Howard B. Clarke* (Dublin, 2009), pp 39–62; C. Etchingham, 'Evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Wicklow' in K. Hannigan and W. Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: history*

even of hybrid Scandinavian settlement names. The overlying influence of the Anglo-Norman lordship from 1171 may well have had a role in obfuscating the Norse onomastic presence in Dyflinnarskíri, but the dearth of Scandinavian habitative names in Ireland, especially in comparison to their abundance in north-west England, is nonetheless striking. The Isle of Man presents a curious microcosm whereby most of the parish names ending in *-by* are located on the south-eastern side of the island, whereas the main concentrations of Viking archaeology lie on its northern and western sides. The suspicion has been voiced that some of the Manx 'Viking' place-names are in fact a result of Lancastrian influence brought about during the Stanley lordship over the island in the high Middle Ages and that resurgent Manx Gaelic may have obliterated all but very few of the original Norse names prior to this period, although this theory has since been questioned.²³ Nonetheless, the fact that it was advanced at all indicates the degree of scholarly doubt surrounding the early authenticity of Viking-Age place-names in areas outside the coverage of Domesday Book.

VIKINGS AND IRISH IN BRITAIN: A CASE FOR DISTINCTIVENESS

A recent collection of papers entitled *Anglo-Saxon/Irish relations before the Vikings* (2009)²⁴ has provided a richly informative overview and exploration of the relationships of church and secular society across the Irish Sea. From law, language and writing, to saints' cults, shared monastic and artistic traditions, trading connections and intermarriage, the cultures and economies of two islands were distinctive yet deeply and irrevocably interlinked. Yet this collection of papers contains almost no comment on how these well-established relationships fared after the arrival of Vikings in the midst of Irish and English society in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. The title of the collection is emblematic of the notion, perhaps unconsciously evident here, that the 790s to early 800s were a major watershed, where the development of the Insular world appears to have been stopped in its tracks, or at least changed out of all recognition, following the Viking attacks. This is surely in need of revision. The short editorial preface to the volume provides a justification in concentrating exclusively on the pre-Viking period, in that several other recent conferences had focused on Viking-Age Ireland and the Irish Sea region. Although not referenced explicitly in this context, these would apparently include *Viking treasure from the north west* (1992) and *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (1998),²⁵

and society (Dublin, 1994), pp 113–38. 23 G. Fellows-Jensen, 'How old are the Scandinavian place-names in Man?', *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 11:3 (2003), 423–36. 24 J. Graham-Campbell and M. Ryan (eds), *Anglo-Saxon/Irish relations before the Vikings* (Oxford, 2009). 25 J.A. Graham-Campbell (ed.), *Viking treasure from the north west: the Cuerdale hoard in its context* (Liverpool, 1992); Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and*

which have the traditional lodestar of Scandinavian involvement as their main preoccupation. Therefore, thus far remarkably little attention has been given to continuity and change within existing Irish–British relationships throughout the period of Viking attacks and settlements. Continuity of some measure surely there must have been. As shown above, the Scandinavians and their descendants were neither numerous nor culturally dominant enough to eclipse or extinguish more long-term patterns and traditions of contact.

Historical sources and place-names show a subtle awareness on the part of annalists of a distinction not only between different types of ‘Foreigner’, but of ethnic distinctions among their followers too. The population, its language and the material culture of Viking Ireland was surely becoming extensively hybridized well before the historically attested foundation of the Dublin *longphort* in 841. The Gallgóidil, who appear between 856 and 858, were of principal interest to the annalists in that they were opposed to the ‘dark’ Foreigners and allied with their Irish enemies. This very minimal definition could potentially encompass people of both Irish and Scandinavian origins (indeed, to stretch a point, perhaps even a few individuals of other origins such as English, Welsh or Pictish). The story of Ingimund (or Hingamund) in the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland is a case in point.²⁶ Ingimund, a Dublin leader who had been expelled by the Irish (probably in 902), unsuccessfully attempted to take land in Anglesey before settling in Mercia and besieging a city called *Legaceastre* (Chester, ‘city of the [Roman] legions’).²⁷ In this account not only are Norwegians (Lochlanns) and Danes clearly distinguished in the text, but also the Irish and Irish-born allies of the Scandinavians are referred to as a separately identifiable group from these. John O’Donovan translated it thus: ‘Then the king [Æthelred, ealdorman of Mercia] who was on the point of death and the queen [Æthelflæd] sent ambassadors to the Gaeidhil who were amongst the pagans (for the Lochlanns, then pagans, had many a gadelian foster-son)’.²⁸ The Mercian petition to the Gaels was successful in that the Irish contingent abandoned their weapons and gave no help to the Danes ‘because they were less friends to them than to the Lochlanns’. This passage gives an important incidental insight into the internal ethno-politics of the attackers: the Gaels were distinguishable from the Lochlanns, even though many had been adopted as sons and clients by them, and the Gaels were not strongly associated with, or loyal to, the Danish contingent.

Place-name scholars have long remarked upon the presence of Gaelic influences in the nomenclature of north-west England and southern Scotland, particularly of the ‘inversion compounds’ that characterize pastoral names such as *ærgi* and *sætr* in Cumbria and Lancashire.²⁹ It has been a matter of debate

Scandinavia. 26 J. O’Donovan (ed. and trans.), *Annals of Ireland: three fragments copied from ancient sources by Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh* (Dublin, 1860); *FA.* 27 Almost certainly Chester but just possibly Leicester, which has the Anglo-Saxon name. 28 O’Donovan (ed. and trans.), *Annals of Ireland*, p. 235. 29 E. Ekwall, *The place-names of Lancashire* (Manchester,

whether these influences came from Ireland or Gaelic Scotland, but perhaps the contemporary political and social distinction between these has been overstated. The presence of Irish settlers in north-west England, as distinct from Scandinavians, can be perceived in the form of *Irby* or *Ireby* names in Wirral, Lancashire and Cumbria.³⁰ These are not widespread, but are distinctive. In her study of the *Ireby* names, Mary Higham perpetuated a 'passive' view of the presence of Irish settlers in the context of north-west England, as contingent upon the stronger Scandinavian presence, stating 'that the Norse may have brought Irishmen with them when they came to the north west'.³¹ She did, however, suggest that the *Ireby* names were a form of 'racial abuse', similar to the way in which *Walton* names were apparently pejorative references to a continued British presence among the Anglo-Saxons. This view at least confers on the Irish presence some distinctiveness within a predominantly Norse naming culture. Dedications to Irish saints are also widespread in north-west England, southern Scotland and Wales, particularly of Patrick, Brigit and C  mgen (Kevin). Patrick became a widespread cult and personal naming tradition in Wales, Strathclyde and Northumbria.³² There are some coincidences between the Irish dedications and the presence of stone sculpture bearing Norse motifs (for example, St Bridget, West Kirby, Wirral; St Bridget, Beckermeth, Cumbria), but these are outnumbered by sculpture sites with English or British dedications and indeed Anglo-Saxon and British parish names.

Rather than continuing to associate Irish or Gaelic toponymic and ecclesiastical connections in north-west England exclusively with the Viking presence, the idea that there was continued and distinctive (if perhaps relatively small-scale) native Irish involvement in western Britain merits further attention. Identifiably Irish material culture found in north-west England and north Wales consists largely of gilded, probably ecclesiastical, metalwork, such as the Llys Awel brooch, decorative escutcheons in the form of a human face from the shores of Morecambe Bay and a gilded mount from Meols, Wirral.³³ These have been seen as objects that arrived in the hands of Vikings, as opposed to evidence of direct contact with Ireland. The tradition of carving standing crosses depicting literal or metaphorical biblical stories is characteristic of Anglo-Saxon and Irish church traditions, from Sandbach to Ruthwell to Monasterboice to Kells. Richard Bailey has noted several examples of ring-headed crosses in north-west England, including Winwick (Cheshire), Walton-on-the-Hill

1922); Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian settlement names in the north-west*. 30 M.C. Higham, 'Scandinavian settlement in north-west England, with a special study of Ireby names' in B.E. Crawford (ed.), *Scandinavian settlement in northern Britain* (Leicester, 1995), pp 195–205. 31 Ibid., p. 199. 32 F. Edmonds, 'Personal names and the cult of Patrick in eleventh-century Strathclyde and Northumbria' in S. Boardman et al. (eds), *Saints' cults and the Celtic world* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp 42–65. 33 M. Redknap, *Vikings in Wales: an archaeological quest* (Cardiff, 2000), p. 23, fig. 22; B.J.N. Edwards, *Vikings in north west England: the artifacts*

(Liverpool) and Greasby (Wirral), where aspects of the design strongly reflect Irish practice. We only have a nineteenth-century drawing and a replica as a record of the latter two examples, but at Winwick parts of the crosshead survive. It has large, symmetrical, block-like termini to the crosshead, with a close-set ring with near circular armpits – features observed on contemporary Irish examples. One end of the cross is a depiction of a priest carrying two hand bells of Irish/Insular type, a common motif in Irish cross-art. A scene of the punishments of hell on the other side with an inverted, suspended central figure between two torturers is also paralleled only in Ireland, with a very close analogy at Ardboe, Co. Tyrone.³⁴

Of the twenty-eight moneyers whose names are recorded on Chester-minted coins from the period 924–39, up to six had Scandinavian names and one had the Gaelic or Irish name Maeldomen, the remainder consisting largely of English names, with two possible Welsh and two possible Frankish names.³⁵ One of the first Chester moneyers, from the reign of Edward the Elder, has the Scandinavian name Irfara ('Ireland journeyer'). It is hard to imagine clearer evidence for the cosmopolitan nature of the growing trading community in the Irish Sea ports. Patrick Wallace identified English influences in the material culture of Dublin in the form of Mercian pottery and Anglo-Saxon coinage, in addition to English fashions in personal ornament such as the over thirty lead-alloy disc brooches found in the Wood Quay area excavations.³⁶ Evidence of ceramics and metalwork from excavations in eleventh- and twelfth-century Waterford confirms strong English links and relatively minimal Scandinavian ones.

GAUGING THE EXTENT OF VIKING IMPACT

It has been shown in the above discussion that migrant Scandinavians were almost certainly not present in Ireland and western Britain in large enough numbers, or in coherent enough political groupings, to overwhelm existing populations or power structures. Vikings had a monopoly neither on trade nor on violence. Mark Redknap has compared the historically recorded attacks in Wales by Vikings and by Welsh and Anglo-Saxon forces between 720 and 1100, and the result shows that Viking attacks were always in a minority compared to the others, even in the two peak periods between 840 and 920 and between 960 and 1000. This analysis makes no reference to the ferocity or horror of individual

(Lancaster, 1998); D. Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea* (Stroud, 2010), pp 109–12. ³⁴ R.N. Bailey, 'The sculptural background' in J. Graham-Campbell and R. Philpott (eds), *The Huxley Viking hoard: Scandinavian settlement in the north west* (Liverpool, 2009), pp 24–8; R.N. Bailey, *Cheshire and Lancashire* (Oxford, 2010), pp 254–8. ³⁵ R.H.M. Dolley, 'The mint of Chester (part I)', *Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural and Archaeological Society*, 42 (1955), 1–20. ³⁶ P.F. Wallace, 'The English presence in Viking Dublin' in M.A.S. Blackburn (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon monetary history: essays in memory of Michael Dolley* (Leicester,

events, but its implications are salutary. It has, moreover, been appreciated since the work of Anthony Lucas in the 1960s that a comparable situation is observable in Ireland, where the existing climate of intercommunal violence created both an opportunity and a danger for incomers, whose presence in Ireland was mostly precarious and dependent on coalition with one or more native factions.³⁷ Vikings were as often victims as conquerors and in many areas their detectable material presence is no more than fragmentary and fleeting, in marked contrast (in Britain) to the unmistakably solid and durable imprint of their predecessors as invaders, the Romans.

Yet recognizably Scandinavian iconography, motifs and other traits persisted in art, technology and language around the Irish Sea throughout not just the ninth century, but also the tenth and eleventh centuries and even beyond. How can we reconcile the apparently sporadic Scandinavian influence, together with the apparent lack of evidence for mass- or folk-migration into western Britain and Ireland, with the longevity and survival of cultural forms that derive from Scandinavia? Perhaps we should be looking not for successive or concentrated waves of migration, but the construction of an inherited 'expatriate' mythic or ancestral past that was passed down the generations of migrant kin-groups in the Insular west and theatrically equipped with curated, 'heirloom' artefacts. This had its role and purpose within the political and social context of Ireland and Britain. Yet more fascinatingly, why and how did Scandinavian traits continue, by surviving and moulding themselves to the new realities after the Christian conversion, to go on to play a role in constructing identity in the Irish Sea region in the eleventh and even the twelfth century?

Runic inscriptions and representations of Scandinavian art styles appear to point towards a prestige cultural role for Viking traditions in the region. Runes are relatively restricted in geographical area. Dublin has a cluster of inscriptions, mainly statements of ownership on small and relatively common portable items such as wooden tags or combs. The Isle of Man has a series of stone monumental inscriptions, which date to the tenth and eleventh centuries.³⁸ North-west England, however, despite an existing local tradition of Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions, is almost devoid of early static inscriptions; those few that occur in Cumbrian churches are relatively late, dating loosely to the twelfth century. By the eleventh century the Norwegian runic tradition had begun to depart from Irish Sea styles and forms; the latter became much more closely linked to Gaelic names and expressions, in the process losing some of their grammatical accuracy as renditions of Old Norse. Manx and Irish runic inscriptions contain a

1986), pp 201–21. 37 Redknap, *Vikings in Wales*, p. 30; A.T. Lucas, 'Irish-Norse relations: time for a reappraisal?', *JCAHS*, 71 (1966), 62–75. 38 M. Barnes et al., *The runic inscriptions of Viking-Age Dublin* (Dublin, 1997); M. Barnes and R.I. Page, *The Scandinavian runic inscriptions of Britain* (Uppsala, 2006); D.M. Wilson, *The Vikings in the Isle of Man* (Aarhus, 2008).

considerable number of Gaelic personal names and references to places, and some (such as the stone inscriptions from Kirk Michael and Maughold on the Isle of Man and Killaloe, Co. Clare) have parallel ogham inscriptions. Runes appear to have been retained in the Isle of Man and in a few isolated cases in Ireland as a conservative and socially prestigious epigraphic alphabet. These examples appear to hark back to the pre-eminence of the original Viking settlers, whereas succeeding generations appear to have paid less and less heed to their linguistic authenticity, suggesting that Old Norse had become less well-understood by an increasingly acculturated Gaelic/Scandinavian populace. Did Old Norse become analogous to medieval Latin – a prestige language understood by an educated few, written well and spoken fluently by even fewer, but in its aural and written forms remaining widely familiar and perceived as powerful and authoritative, even by those who could not understand or read its literal meaning?

Sculpture and metalwork styles give similar signals to the biological and artefactual evidence, in that Scandinavian influence is prominent, but contained and backward looking in comparison to other elements. The carved crosses, grave-slabs and hogbacks of northern England and south-west Scotland, like many of the Manx crosses, depict scenes from Norse mythology and also other scenes, such as battle scenes, that are not readily understood in relation to the (somewhat later) written record in Icelandic sagas and poetry, but appear to belong to the Norse canon of legendary and mythological images. A prominent example is the Gosforth cross, Cumbria: the decoration of the four-sided shaft enacts a series of images of the Old Germanic pantheon, including the gods Óðinn, Vidar, Loki and Heimdallr. Sigurd scenes are prominent in Lancashire and the Isle of Man. Thor, together with his rival Hymir, appears on the 'fishing scene stone' at Gosforth. These 'pagan' mythological scenes are replicated in Yorkshire, but not in Ireland. The ways in which the mythological scenes have been used are shown to have strong Christian connotations,³⁹ and it is of course the case that the ultimate agency of standing crosses was towards Christian conversion and demonstrating the legitimacy of their landed patrons.

Scandinavian-derived influences on decorated stone, wood and metalwork are also evident across Britain and Ireland. These include the Borre ring-chain motifs, which are present on crosses and metalwork across northern England, Wales and the Isle of Man, on Jellinge- and Mammen-style beasts such as the particularly splendid rendition from Kirk Braddan, Isle of Man, and on the large group of Ringerike-style influenced wooden objects from Dublin.⁴⁰ Yet to a great extent these motifs, styles and images were shaped, recast and reinterpreted in the Insular and urban context, redefining their symbolism and agency away from distant Norwegian origins to the concerns of the contemporary present in

³⁹ R.N. Bailey, *Viking-Age sculpture in northern England* (London, 1980). ⁴⁰ Wilson, *Vikings in the Isle of Man*; J.T. Lang, *Viking-Age decorated wood: a study of its ornament and style*

Ireland and Britain. The Ringerike and Urnes styles seem to have been particularly favoured by the Scandinavian-descended elites in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, as is also evident across Anglo-Scandinavian England, notably from London, Winchester and Lincoln.

A prominent example of a type of hybrid 'Viking' monument unknown in Scandinavia, but common in northern England, is the hogback stone – decorated longhouse-shaped monoliths that were probably (but not certainly in all cases) used as grave-markers.⁴¹ Hogbacks appear to have resulted from a fusion of Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian influences and are sited prominently at parish churches, apparently denoting local landownership and political seniority. Their connection to political power is an area that continues to be debated and researched. At Govan, on the Clyde, a group of substantial hogbacks exists, well away from areas of concentrated Norse toponymic influence or pagan burials.⁴² They suggest that there was some element of high-ranking Viking involvement in the symbolism and identity of the kingdom of Strathclyde, which is otherwise generally understood as a northern British polity and was a victim, rather than a beneficiary, of Viking activity.⁴³

The example of Govan reminds us that Viking influences may be sought in unexpected places, just as they may prove elusive in more obvious ones. Scandinavian cultural traits persisted in language, inscriptions and material culture during and beyond the Viking Age, arguably not as symbols of conquest and dominance through the settled, post-conversion era, but as mnemonics for a long-gone and mythologized ancestral prestige that probably dates back to the very few original settlers of the ninth and early tenth centuries. The process of acculturation and hybridization of cultures is undoubtedly the central theme of the Viking Age in Britain and Ireland, not its diminution or a distraction from it. Tangible distinctions existed throughout between biological Scandinavians, polyglot 'Vikings' of more eclectic background and experience, and those often seen as their fellow travellers such as the Irish in northern England. Locality, nuance and subtlety triumph over sweeping models of invasion and conquest.

Many existing historical arguments about Vikings in Britain and Ireland do not sufficiently appreciate the potential for ethnic convergence and the creation of new identities, within individual lifetimes and even very early in the history of Viking activity in the west. These have mostly remained locked into a binary opposition of clearly defined categories of Viking and native – something that is an increasing hindrance to understanding as the depth and complexity of intercommunal relationships are becoming clearer. The impact of these complex social transformations on material culture and economic activity is something

(Dublin, 1988). ⁴¹ J.T. Lang, 'The hogback, a Viking colonial monument', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 3 (1984), 86–176. ⁴² C. Dalglish and S. Driscoll, *Historic Govan: archaeology and development* (Glasgow, 2009). ⁴³ D. Broun, 'The Welsh identity of the kingdom of Strathclyde, c.900–1200', *Innes Review*, 55 (2004), 111–80.

that we strive to understand. More to the point, we must also take account of the concomitant influence in the other direction – the role and agency of new technologies, art forms and ways of living (for example, urban life) on peoples' perceptions of their own identities, political and religious allegiances, and cultural preferences in architecture, diet and personal ornament. Excavations in towns have provided a particular wealth of interpretative potential in this regard.⁴⁴

Above all, having highlighted some doubts about traditional perceptions of the Viking presence in Ireland and western Britain, this essay seeks only to act as a holding statement. In the near future we are due to benefit enormously from a range of new researches, both scientific on diet and geographical origin, and cultural on language, history and traditions. The nature and dynamism of the Viking diaspora is being subjected to unprecedented interdisciplinary attention.⁴⁵ We can expect our academic perceptions of Scandinavians, other Vikings and the peoples with whom they came into contact to be as acutely informed and altered within our own lifetimes as indeed religion, ethnicity and allegiance were evidently transformed within their own.

⁴⁴ D.M. Hadley and L. Ten Harkel (eds), *Everyday life in Viking towns: social approaches to towns in England, c.800–1100* (Oxford, 2013). ⁴⁵ www2.le.ac.uk/projects/impact-of-diasporas/; www.vikingage.mic.ul.ie/viking_genetic_research.html.

Vikings in Ireland: the catastrophe

DONNCHADH Ó CORRÁIN

When Archbishop Giovanni Battista Rinuccini was despatched to Ireland, in 1645, as nuncio extraordinary, by the pro-Spanish pope Leo X, on a delicate mission of high papal politics, he was provided with a carefully wrought briefing on Irish history, evidently based on some searches in the papal archives. On the early medieval period it read:

The kingdom of Ireland, which contains within itself four noble provinces – Munster, Leinster, Connacht and Ulster – was once an ancient possession of the Apostolic See. It was converted to Christianity during the reign of Celestine I, in the fifth century of our redemption, first by St Palladius, afterwards by St Patrick, the disciple of St Germanus. For a long period the true faith maintained itself, till the country, invaded by the Danes [*read* Norwegians], an idolatrous people, fell for the most part into impious superstition. Those who remained faithful still bowed in obedience to the Holy See, and acknowledged no other supreme head but the sovereign pontiff of Rome.

This state of darkness lasted till the reigns of Adrian IV and Henry II, king of England. Henry, desiring to strengthen his empire, and to secure the provinces which he possessed beyond the sea in France, wished to subdue the island of Ireland; and, to compass this design, had recourse to Adrian, who, himself an Englishman, with a liberal hand granted him all he coveted.

The zeal manifested by Henry to convert all Ireland to the faith moved the soul of Adrian to invest him with the sovereignty of the island. Three important conditions were annexed to the gift. 1st. That the king should do all in his power to propagate the Christian religion throughout Ireland. 2nd. That each of his subjects should pay an annual tribute of one penny to the Holy See, commonly called Peter's pence. And 3rd. That civil liberty should be guaranteed and the privileges and immunities of the church be held inviolate. Henry, having thus become master of Ireland, soon planted colonies of his English subjects through the country, and sought from that hour to reduce the betrayed inhabitants, no less in spiritual than in temporal affairs, to his will.¹

1 G. Aiazzi, *The embassy in Ireland of Monsignor G.B. Rinuccini, archbishop of Fermo, in the years*

When I first interested myself in Viking studies, about 1970, most of that large field was long fallow (if it was ever otherwise), and Rinuccini's briefing might still pass muster with many as a summary of what had happened, that is to say, the golden age had ended with the Viking attacks, church and culture had gone into steep decline, and the benevolent action of Pope Adrian IV could be understood in that general context.

The sections on Ireland in general works on the Vikings tended to be poor and inaccurate. This long and very varied period of Irish history stretched from the dying years of the eighth century to the middle of the eleventh – a period as long as from the Battle of the Boyne to 1940. But in the hands of the historians it had remained a time of unceasing troubles, a largely undifferentiated bad patch. Good and mostly sensible general works had lamentably bad sections on Ireland. For instance, the sedate Johannes Brøndsted writes foolhardily:

In 839 the Norwegian chieftain Turgeis arrived with a large fleet in the north of Ireland, and declared himself as the annals relate, 'king of all foreigners in Erin'. He was an active soldier and a confirmed pagan. He founded Dublin and tried to replace Christianity by the worship of Thor; in Armagh, the holy of holies of Christian Ireland, he officiated as pagan high priest.²

Gwyn Jones excels himself. He remains at a safe distance from tedious source criticism and finds rhetoric (somewhat like his own) in the Annals of Ulster for 802, citing, in translation, the following passage: 'The sea spewed forth floods of foreigners over Erin, so that no haven, no landing-place, no stronghold, no fort, no castle might be found, but it was submerged by waves of Vikings and pirates'.³ One searches in vain for this gem in the annals. Its origin appears – at some distance – in *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, an historicist propaganda work written about 1100:

Do lionadh Mumha uile do thola eradbhail, 7 do murbrucht diaisneisi long, 7 laidheng, 7 cobhlach, conach raibhe cuan, na caladhphort, no dún, no daingen, no dingna i Mumhain uile gan loingeas Danmarccach 7 allmurach.

1645–1649, trans. A. Hutton (Dublin, 1873), pp xxviii–xxix. Since the translator misses some nuances, one should consult the Italian original in G. Aiazzi (ed.), *Nunziatura in Irlanda di Monsignor Gio. Batista Rinuccini ... negli anni 1645 a 1649* (Florence, 1844), pp xxxv–lii, l. For some more papal light on the condition of the Irish and their history, see 'quod cum terra Ybernica ac eius incole, ut tenentur, nec sedi eidem, nec regi Anglie obedirent, sed velut effrenes per campum licentie ducerentur, clare memorie Henricus olim rex Anglorum de voluntate sedis ipsius armata manu terram predicatam intravit et eam ac habitatores ipius ad eiusdem sedis obedientiam suaque pro posse reduxit' (letter of Pope Nicholas IV, 1290, in A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum historiam illustrantia* (Rome, 1864), p. 151, § CCCXXI). 2 J. Brøndsted, *The Vikings* (London, 1965), p. 57. Pagan missionaries are scarce in early medieval Europe. 3 G. Jones, *A history of the Vikings* (London and New

The whole of Munster became filled with immense floods, and countless sea-vomitings of ships, and boats, and fleets, so that there was not a harbour, nor a landing-port, nor a *dún*, nor a fortress, nor a fastness, in all Munster, without fleets of Danes and pirates.⁴

This vivid passage bears only on Munster and refers to the renewed Viking attack in the beginning of the tenth century.

Even the measured and careful T.D. Kendrick is led astray by the story of Turgesius:

Yet, like many another Viking chieftain in the hour of his success, he did not know when to stay his hand and remain content with the dominions under his sway; for his relentless and savage campaign against organised Christianity, which culminated in a final outrage when Aud, his wife, gave her heathen audience at the high altar of Clonmacnois, made the prospect of his overlordship so intolerable that at last the faithful men of Meath rose in their dismay and their king, Mael Seachlinn, by trickery rather than fighting, captured him and drowned him in Loch Owel.⁵

This is a confection of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* (ch. 11), a tall tale of Giraldus Cambrensis⁶ and, at the end, a genuine annal.⁷

In the view of the de Paors, 'Turgesius ... established a stronghold by the Dubh-Linn (black pool) at the ford of the Liffey. Here he was master of the earliest Viking state recorded in the history of Western Europe'.⁸ Indeed, he was nothing of the sort, nor could he have been. In fact, the history of the Vikings in Ireland had been greatly neglected. The essential research of Marstrander was unread for the most part.⁹ The last general book published in Ireland that took

York, 1968), p. 204. 4 CGG, pp 40–1. Todd's plural 'sea-vomitings' renders the singular *murbrúcht* 'sea-burst, sea-belching, tidal wave'. Naturally, such a colourful term is guaranteed a *fortuna*. See, for example, M. de Paor and L. de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (London, 1958), p. 133. Its last outings known to me are in T.J. Craughwell, *How the barbarian invasions shaped the modern world: the Vikings, Vandals, Huns, Mongols, Goths and Tartars* (Beverly, MA, 2008), p. 165; M. Cronin, *Irish history for dummies* (2nd ed. Chichester, 2011), p. 69. On CGG, see the critical papers of M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Cogad Gaedel re Gallaib: some dating considerations', *Peritia*, 9 (1995), 354–77; 'Cogad Gaedel re Gallaib and the annals: a comparison', *Ériu*, 47 (1996), 101–26; 'Friend and foe: Vikings in ninth- and tenth-century Irish literature' in H.B. Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), pp 381–402. 5 T.D. Kendrick, *A history of the Vikings* (London, 1930; repr. New York, 2004), p. 277. 6 *Giraldi Cambrensis opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer et al., 8 vols (London, 1861–91), v, pp 184–5; *The historical works of Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. T. Wright (London, 1863), p. 151; Gerald of Wales, *The history and topography of Ireland*, ed. and trans. J.J. O'Meara (London, 1982), pp 120–1; J. Stewart, 'The death of Turgesius', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 18 (1970–1), 47–58. 7 *AU*, s.a. 844. 8 De Paor and de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 132. 9 C.J.S. Marstrander, *Bidrag til det norske sprogs historie i Irland* (Kristiania, 1915). Even A. Sommerfelt's résumé of Marstrander's work, 'Recherches sur l'histoire du

writings in the Scandinavian languages into account came out in 1922, and the research for that was carried out at Cambridge under the direction of H.M. Chadwick.¹⁰ Johannes Bøe's 'Viking antiquities in Ireland', the third part of Haakon Shetelig's magisterial *Viking antiquities*,¹¹ based on research carried out in Irish museums in 1926, was little read (among other things, it throws some light on the poor organization and scant scholarship of the museums). Shetelig's important introductory essay,¹² for all its faults (and they are many), seems to have been largely ignored, though his references to looted Irish antiquities in Scandinavia¹³ are very important – a theme well developed much later by Egon Wamers.¹⁴

The fundamental problem about the historiography of the Vikings in Ireland had been the absence of serious source criticism.¹⁵ Good data from the contemporary annals, some poorly edited, were interwoven with sagas written long after the events they purport to record, sometimes centuries later. For example, serious scholars, among them Brøndsted, Kendrick, Shetelig, and Foote and Wilson, were quite happy to use *Heimskringla*, conventionally dated to c.1230, as a good source for Tuirgéis' alleged kingship of Dublin or indeed its foundation in the first half of the ninth century. The shadow of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, written in the inflated prose of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, despite its bombast and its self-evident exaggerations, looms large and scholars have not yet, I believe, freed themselves from its pervasive influence. It divides into two parts: a selection of historical annals (some uniquely preserved in it) recounting the Viking attacks on Ireland,¹⁶ and conveying, by their skilful arrangement, an impression of unmitigated violence and disaster; and, its counterpoint, a tendentious narrative of the glorious career of Brian Bórama and his victory at Clontarf, carefully crafted to enhance the status of his successors. This was written in the reign of Brian's great-grandson, Muirchertach Ua Briain, king of Ireland, in or within a few years of 1100, when the activities in the west of Magnus Barelegs, king of Norway, appeared to threaten Ireland. It is a propaganda text to which the equally tendentious *Brjáns saga* seems to be a

vieux-norrois en Irlande', *Revue Celtique*, 39 (1922), 175–98 remained uncited. 10 A. Walsh, *Scandinavian relations with Ireland during the Viking period* (Dublin, 1922). 11 H. Shetelig (ed.), *Viking antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, 6 pts (Oslo, 1940–54). 12 Ibid., i, pp 46–77. 13 Ibid., pp 55–7 and throughout the whole work. 14 E. Wamers, 'Some ecclesiastical and secular Insular metalwork found in Norwegian Viking graves', *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 277–306; E. Wamers, *Insularer Metallschmuck in wikingerzeitlichen Gräbern Nordeuropas* (Neumünster, 1985); E. Wamers, 'Insular finds in Viking-Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 37–72. 15 For a critique, see C. Doherty, 'The Vikings in Ireland: a review' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 288–330. J. Ryan, 'The Battle of Clontarf', *JRSAL*, 68 (1938), 1–50 is the first serious attempt to evaluate the sources for that much misunderstood event. For the annals of this period, see C. Etchingham, *Viking raids on Irish church settlements in the ninth century* (Maynooth, 1996). 16 R.H. Leech, 'Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh and the Annals of Inisfallen', *NMAJ*, 11 (1968), 13–21; Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh and the annals'.

Dublin riposte that seeks to exculpate the ancestors of the burghers of Dublin from any complicity in the death of King Brian.¹⁷ We owe to the eloquent author of *Cogadh* and his uncritical readers the disaster hypothesis, that is, that the Vikings had a uniquely destructive effect on Ireland that ruined its high culture, debased its church and broke its indigenous institutions.

Let us begin with the foremost historian of Irish medieval art, Françoise Henry:

The Vikings ... belonged to a different world that knew nothing of these unwritten laws. They brought havoc, cutting mercilessly through the network of family relations and established loyalties. Pagans, they violently shocked a society which had become essentially Christian. They plundered without restitution, destroyed without redress ... It was not long before Iona in its turn felt the brunt of the attack. The island metropolis of all the monasteries of St Columba was burnt down ... The disaster appeared so complete that it was decided to abandon the too exposed island or at least to transfer the metropolis of the Columban order to Ireland ... The most austere establishments were not immune from the pirates who were aware, by that time, that there were treasuries of gold and silver even on the most desolate rocks, and we are left to guess at a tragedy of desolation and hunger on the Skellig. ... Their notion of war and massacre was merciless ... A Norse king [Turgesius] established in Armagh, holding in mock power the place of the abbot, successor of St Patrick, his queen keeping her court in the churches of the most hallowed of all Irish monasteries, destruction by the invader with 'only foreign language', desecration by the pagan 'without Pater, without Credo'; the calamity had reached its most dramatic point ... The invaders became a permanent plague rooted in the midst of the land.

What was the effect of these two centuries of invasion and foreign occupation on life in Ireland and on the conditions of artistic production? First of all the effect on the monasteries has to be examined, because ... they were the centres of civilisation and of artistic patronage. On them, the impact of the Vikings was catastrophic.¹⁸

Yet despite this eloquent description of barbarism and havoc – and indeed there was a great deal of killing, destruction, burning and robbery, especially in the middle years of the ninth century, and again in the early tenth – Henry admits a few pages later that Finglas and Tallaght, near neighbours of Viking Dublin, one to the north, one to the south, survived well. She could have mentioned that

¹⁷ D. Ó Corráin, 'Viking Ireland – afterthoughts' in Clarke et al. (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia*, pp 447–52. ¹⁸ F. Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions (800–1020 AD)* (London, 1967), pp 5–6, 8–9, 10–11, 17.

Bran of Finglas, bishop and scribe, died peacefully in 838 and that Robartach of Finglas, bishop and scribe, ‘fell asleep in Christ’ in 867;¹⁹ or Clondalkin, a near neighbour to the south-west of Viking Dublin that had a more chequered history. It was plundered by the Vikings in 833. Amlaíb of Dublin established a fortress there: that was burnt by the Irish in 867 and a hundred Viking officers were slaughtered on the same day at the boundary of the monastery. The opponents of the Vikings were two: the king of Loígis and Máel Ciaráin, son of the abbot of Clondalkin, leading his monastic troops. Its abbot–bishop died in 882 and obits of its abbots are recorded for 888–9, 922, 940 and 1086.²⁰

In another work she states that ‘the first impact of the Vikings on Irish art was catastrophic’. She claims that Nendrum ‘disappeared in the tenth century’ and that Bangor ‘remained in ruins until the twelfth century. In fact, that disappearance of these two spiritual and civilizing centres had as a consequence the state of moral chaos described by St Bernard’.²¹ But Colmán, abbot–bishop and scribe of Nendrum, rested in Christ in 873.²² Its erenagh, however, died in a house fire in 976.²³ The matter-of-fact annal specifies neither accident nor arson, nor does it make any mention of Vikings as perpetrators. For Proinsias Mac Cana, too, ‘Bangor, which Zimmer spoke of as the “intellectual metropolis of Ireland”, never recovered from the devastation’.²⁴ But Abbot Mael Gaimrid of Bangor, who died in 839, is described as *scriba optimus et ancorita*.²⁵ One of his successors, Moengal ailithir *uitam senilem feliciter finiuit*²⁶ – hardly a troubled death. Obits of abbots of Bangor occur regularly in the annals.²⁷ Nor need one doubt the quality of Bangor’s schools and scholars: Abbot Móenach mac Siadail, who died a peaceful death in 921, is entitled *cenn ecna innse Érenn*, ‘head of the scholarship of the island of Ireland’.²⁸ His successor, Céile, who left Bangor to go on pilgrimage to Rome in 928, is described as *scriba et anchorita et apostolicus doctor totius Hibernie*.²⁹ One need not take St Bernard’s talk of moral chaos too seriously: his testimony on the quality of life and culture in Bangor, and in the Irish church in general, is worth little.

19 *AU*, s.a. 837, 866; *AFM*, s.a. 879. 20 *AU*, s.a. 834, 866; *AFM*, s.a. 885, 920, 938, 1086; C. Doherty, ‘Cluain Dolcáin: a brief note’ in A.P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas: studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), pp 182–8. 21 F. Henry, ‘The effects of the Viking invasions on Irish art’ in B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Congress of Celtic Studies, Dublin, 1959* (Dublin, 1962), pp 62–3; repr. as *The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples, c.800–1100 AD* (Dublin, 1975). 22 *AU*, s.a. 872. 23 *Ibid.*, s.a. 975. 24 P. Mac Cana, ‘The influence of the Vikings on Celtic literature’ in Ó Cuív (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Congress*, p. 104. 25 *AU*, s.a. 838. 26 *Ibid.*, s.a. 872. 27 *Ibid.*, s.a. 882, 883, 905, 920, 927, 928, 939, 952, 952, 967, 980, 1016, 1025, 1030, 1055, 1058, 1068, 1097, 1123, 1163. True, Abbot Tanaide mac Uidir was killed by the Vikings in 958, but being abbot of Bangor was a low enough actuarial risk. Artgal mac Coscracháin, a grand pluralist who combined the abbacy of Bangor and Movilla, died *iar n-deighbhethaidh cian-aosda*, ‘in extreme old age after a good life’ in 975 (*AFM*, s.a. 973). 28 *AU*, s.a. 920. 29 *Ibid.*, s.a. 927, 928.

Nevertheless, Henry was far too good a scholar to be wholly misled by the disaster hypothesis:

However, of the chief monastic cities enumerated with such pomp in the *Martyrology of Óengus* around 800, not a single one disappeared in the time of the Vikings. There was an extraordinary power of survival in these towns built mostly of wood ... Houses and churches were built anew and ramparts mended, ready to withstand a new attack ... The position of Armagh is perhaps even more striking. Its resources allowed it to be rebuilt even more quickly and more easily than the other big monastic cities.³⁰

For N.K. Chadwick, the Viking wars and the end of the Irish golden age are simply cause and effect: 'The "Viking Terror" crashed into Ireland, perhaps towards the close of the eighth century and brought the "Age of the Saints" to an end'.³¹ She makes no attempt to substantiate this large claim apart from some *obiter dicta*:

But as a matter of history there is no doubt that the Vikings destroyed the monastic scriptoria on a wide scale, and with them the highly developed art of manuscript illumination. The tradition was broken, the artists scattered. Yet in many ways this irreparable loss to Ireland has been our lasting gain, for Irish learning and the high development of the Irish scriptoria made Irish scholars and their books, their high intellectual culture, welcome everywhere in continental centres of learning.³²

As we shall see, the claim that the Viking wars led to an exodus of Irish scholars, made by Kenney, Murphy, Chadwick and many others, needs to be heavily qualified.

Though very acute, Kathleen Hughes, at first sight, appears to subscribe, in large measure, to the notion of catastrophe. Curiously, she tends to play down Irish violence, including that directed against the church, before and during the Viking wars,³³ while she plays up the ill deeds of the Vikings.

The real terror began in 832 ... The effect of the Viking terror on the churches was physically and mentally devastating ... Respect and veneration had been accorded to the church for so long that the Viking

³⁰ Henry, *Irish art*, p. 25. ³¹ N.K. Chadwick, 'The Vikings and the western world' in Ó Cuív (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Congress*, p. 20. ³² *Ibid.*, pp 41–2. ³³ One finds the corrective powerfully stated in A.T. Lucas, 'Irish-Norse relations: time for a reappraisal?', *JCHAS*, 71 (1966), 62–75; A.T. Lucas, 'The plundering and burning of churches in Ireland, 7th to 16th century' in E. Rynne (ed.), *North Munster studies: essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick, 1967), pp 172–229. Kathleen Hughes offers a perceptive critique of Lucas (*Early Christian Ireland: introduction to the sources* (London,

treatment left men bewildered ... But against the Vikings the church was defenceless. The wrath of the saint meant nothing to them ... What can have been the effect on the Irish when they saw these desecrations occur, not once but many times, with no supernatural vengeance? ... Ireland was submerged by confusion and anarchy. It was as if a shoal of sharks had got into a paddling pool.³⁴

Nevertheless, once she has made this emotional statement, calm returns. She is perceptive and sympathetic in her evaluation of the Irish church, balanced in her judgments, keenly appreciative of its literature, art and religious sentiment in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but too easy, perhaps, on its hard-faced, privileged and rapacious ecclesiarchs.

For D.A. Binchy, the Viking attack brought about 'the passing of the old order', the collapse of the socio-legal structure of early medieval Ireland, an order that, in his view at least, appears to be of venerable (perhaps timeless) antiquity. Warfare, and with it, social structures were changed almost beyond recognition:

In fact, as early as the tenth century some radical transformations had occurred; and I believe that most, if not all, of them may be ascribed to the impact of the Norse invaders upon the traditional order of society. Indeed, I regard the challenge from the Norsemen as a watershed in the history of Irish institutions ... In pre-Norse times, all wars, inter-tribal and inter-provincial alike, followed a curiously ritual pattern. They were hedged around with taboos: one did not continue to fight after one's king had been slain; one did not annex the enemy's territory or confiscate any of their lands; one did not dethrone the 'sacred' tribal dynasty; one refrained from attacking a number of 'neutral zones' on enemy soil – the monastic settlements, the property of the learned castes (*áes dána*), and so on. Now, however, the Irish found themselves faced with an alien foe who respected none of the traditional conventions.³⁵

It is difficult to find evidence to support such large claims and Binchy adduces none. In effect, this is yet another version of the disaster hypothesis, more ingenious but equally mistaken. These opinions come from too narrow and too selective an interpretation of the classical Irish law texts, many written in the seventh century and thus a century, or indeed more, had elapsed between their composition and the coming of the Vikings. His views are coloured, too, by literary texts of uncertain date that are open to a different interpretation. Some of these were, in any case, written in the ninth century and later. The 'old order'

1972), pp 148–59), but his conclusions stand. ³⁴ K. Hughes, *The church in early Irish society* (London, 1966), pp 199–200, 205. ³⁵ D.A. Binchy, 'The passing of the old order' in Ó Cuív

itself – an imagined archaic and unchanging social structure – is very much the product of Binchy's own singular reading of the law tracts. The annals and genealogies reveal a pre-Viking Ireland ruled by great kings and aristocrats, some claiming to be kings of Ireland, who were engaged in precisely the activities he would refer to the Viking impact. The decline of Uí Fiachrach in Connacht and the violent rise and expansion of Uí Briúin, for example, needed no help from the Vikings, and in any event it had happened before their coming. The same can be said of many more kingdoms and kindreds.

For Binchy, Ireland was a land without trade or market place – a belief that sorts ill with what we know of Ireland's pre-Viking trade, even from Irish literature. In a text compiled not later than the early ninth century, but from earlier materials, Cairpre asks: 'What is best for a king?' Cormac's reply lists, among many other things:

Barca do thochor i port

Allmaire sét ...

Étach sirecda ...

Imbed fína sceo meda.

Bringing ships into harbour

Importing overseas treasure ...

Silk fabric ...

Abundance of wine and mead.³⁶

So much for a tribal society and the absence of trade and the market place. Literary, historical and archaeological evidence tells a different tale.³⁷ Irish kings, as others elsewhere, encouraged trade and taxed it.

It is often said that the Viking raids of the mid-ninth century caused an exodus of Irish scholars, poets and teachers to Francia. Gerard Murphy notes seventeen references to *Nortmanni* in poems of the reign of Charles the Bald.³⁸ All are by Irishmen, thirteen by Sedulius Scottus, four by Johannes Scottus Eriugena. Of the six references to *Dani* (Danes), one is by Sedulius. Writing to Hartgar (d. 855), the wealthy and powerful lord-bishop of Liège, he states:

(ed.), *Proceedings of the International Congress*, pp 121, 128. ³⁶ K. Meyer, *The instructions of King Cormac mac Airt* (Dublin, 1909), § 1. See F. Kelly, *Early Irish farming: a study based mainly on the law-texts of the 7th and 8th centuries AD* (Dublin, 1997), pp 90, 529. ³⁷ H. Zimmer, *Über direkte Handelsverbindungen Westgalliens mit Irland im Altertum und früherer Mittelalter*, 4 pts in 2 vols (Berlin, 1909–10); J. Vendryes, 'Les vins de Gaule en Irlande et l'expression *fin aicneta*', *Revue Celtique*, 38 (1920), 19–24, 71–5; J.M. Wooding, 'Gaulish artifacts in the Celtic west', *Medieval Europe 1992: a conference on medieval archaeology in Europe 21st–24th September 1992 at the University of York*, 5: *Exchange and trade: pre-printed papers* (York, 1992), pp 169–74; J.M. Wooding, *Communication and commerce along the western sealandes, AD400–800* (Oxford, 1996); M. Comber, 'Trade and communication networks in early historic Ireland', *JIA*, 10 (2001), 73–92. ³⁸ L. Traube (ed.), *Poetae latini aevi carolini*, 3 (Berlin, 1886), pp 151–240.

*Nos tumidus Boreas vastat – miserabile visu –
 Doctos grammaticos presbiterosque pios
 Namque volans Aquilo non ulli parcat honori
 Crudeli rostro nos laniando suo
 Fessis ergo favens, Hartgari floride praesul
 Sophos Scottigenas suscipe corde pio*

The swollen north wind ravages us – piteous to see – learned grammarians and holy priests. For the rushing north wind spares no persons of dignity, lacerating us with his cruel beak. Therefore, a helper of the weary, O flourishing prelate Hartgar, receive with kindly heart us learned Irishmen.

Murphy takes this as a clear reference to the Viking raids on Ireland and as an explanation of the exile of the poet and his two companions.³⁹ In a poem to Charles the Bald, Sedulius contrasts the activity of Irishman and Viking, two foreigners in Francia: ‘Scottus amore sonat vestrum laudabile nomen/ Nortmannusque tremens splendida castra timet’, ‘the Irishman pronounces your admirable name with love/and the trembling Viking fears your splendid fortresses’.⁴⁰ Sedulius’ references are to the Viking raids, but these are unlikely to be the cause of the poet’s exile. Firstly, the Irish were present and influential at the Carolingian court and elsewhere in mainland Europe decades before the Viking attack became significant, and long after the worst had blown over.⁴¹ Secondly, Sedulius was a scholar-courtier, rather a court poet, adept at flattery and at making his case for patronage, in which matter he oversteps the bounds of good taste, as any candid reader of his work will admit. And when Hartgar died, his successor, the warlike bishop Franco, got the same treatment (‘our good pastor, golden star of piety ... glistening topaz ... were not the Norse hordes fearful? Observing your gleaming hosts, they flew swifter than wind to their ships’). And imperial patrons were eulogized with an adulation that only his elegance and wit can mitigate for the disinterested modern reader. Francia was under severe Viking attack for much of the reign of Charles the Bald and Sedulius was well able to use that state of affairs to win sympathy and patronage for himself and his fellows by pleading that they were the exiled and cultivated victims of the very attackers that threatened to overwhelm the Franks. The truth

39 Ibid., p. 168; E.G. Doyle (ed. and trans.), *Sedulius Scottus: On Christian rulers, and the poems* (Binghamton, NY, 1983), p. 101; G. Murphy, ‘Scotti peregrini: the Irish on the Continent in the time of Charles the Bald’, *Studies*, 17 (1928), 45–6. 40 Traube (ed.), *Poetae latini aevi carolini*, pp 180–1; Doyle, *Sedulius Scottus*, pp 113–14. 41 J.F. Kenney, *Sources for the early history of Ireland* (Columbia, 1929), pp 530–604; L. Holtz, ‘Murethach et l’influence de la culture irlandaise à Auxerre’ in D. Iogna-Prat et al. (eds), *L’école carolingienne d’Auxerre: de Murethach à Remi, 830–908* (Paris, 1991), pp 147–56; P. Riché, ‘Les irlandais et les princes carolingiens aux VIIIe et IXe siècles’ in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp 735–45; J.J. Contreni, ‘The Irish in the western Carolingian Empire’ in Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa*, pp 758–98; P. Riché, *Écoles et enseignement dans*

is that leading Irish scholars were not driven out by Viking raids; rather, they were attracted to Francia, as were English, Italian and Spanish scholars, by the patronage afforded by the Carolingians, and especially by Charles the Bald,⁴² at a time when Francia itself was under much more severe attack than Ireland. Theirs was a career choice, and often a very rewarding one.

Much more recently, the disaster hypothesis has been adduced, though more subtly, to account for a perceived break in Irish literary and scholarly activity:

In the wake of the Viking attacks and general societal disruption, a widespread slow-down of learned activity is discernible in Ireland, particularly from the early tenth century. Interruption of scholarship and teaching in monastic institutions is particularly marked throughout much of that century. We may infer from the sparse evidence of textual production and circulation that monastic libraries were stored away for safety, and schools suspended. Thus the *Táin*, like many other works shows an apparent hiatus in use or development in the period before the millennium.⁴³

This hiatus is not evident in the genealogies as a widespread phenomenon that one could connect with the Viking wars: the contemporary genealogies of Lóegaire and Dál Cais are enough to rule that out.⁴⁴ Nor does it appear that, despite their fractured transmission, there is any break in the study and glossing of the law tracts. That glossing and the writing of commentaries (some, in reality, fresh tracts) occur in all stages of the language, without a break, from Old Irish to Early Modern Irish. And there is more. Though no copy, full or partial, of the *Hibernensis* is extant in Ireland, short citations occur in late medieval Irish vernacular legal manuscripts – evidence that a text of the *Hibernensis* survived in Ireland and was available in the Irish vernacular law schools.⁴⁵ I take but one example, *Hibernensis*, 16.4b, ‘Vir namque sanctus valde excelsior est duobus’,

le haut moyen âge (Paris, 1989), pp 69–79, 89–92, 102–10. 42 J.L. Nelson, ‘Charles le Chauve et les utilisations du savoir’ in Iogna-Prat et al. (eds), *L’école carolingienne d’Auxerre*, pp 37–54. 43 M. Herbert, ‘Reading Recension 1 of the *Táin*’ in R. Ó hUiginn and B. Ó Catháin (eds), *Ulidia 2: proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales* (Maynooth, 2009), pp 209–10. See also M. Herbert, ‘Irish written culture around the year 1000’, *CMCS*, 53–4 (2007), 87–91. 44 Book of Lecan (facsimile), 61vb–62vd (lacuna); Book of Ballymote (facsimile), 86a–88e (for Lóegaire); M.A. O’Brien (ed.), *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1962), pp 235–45; Book of Lecan (facsimile), 224va–230va; Book of Ballymote (facsimile), 182a–189b (for Dál Cais). I choose lineages convenient to two Viking kingdoms, Dublin and Limerick. One must also note the remarkable preservation of very early, indeed archaic, genealogies in late medieval manuscripts. Those of Dál Fiatach and Dál nAraide, kept at Bangor and Movilla and both early victims of Viking raids (Book of Lecan (facsimile), 127va–138va and other late medieval manuscripts), contain material that must have an unbroken transmission in writing from the late sixth century. 45 L. Breatnach in D. Ó Corráin et al., ‘The laws of the Irish’, *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 431–8; L. Breatnach, ‘Sedulius Scottus, St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 73, and Latin in the Irish laws’, *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association*, 16 (1993), 122–4.

cited in a legal digest.⁴⁶ One cannot, then, altogether blame the Vikings, and social disorder in the centuries after the Viking period, for the notable loss of the manuscripts of Irish canon law.

The same appears to be true of early medieval biblical texts. Here are a few purely ecclesiastical manuscripts from the tenth century or thereabouts: the Gospels of Mac Durnan, named for Mael Brigte mac Tornáin, pluralist abbot and ecclesiastical grandee (d. 927);⁴⁷ the double psalter of Saint-Ouen, with classic Irish half-uncial for the Gallicanum on the left, another Irish half-uncial for the Hebraicum on the right, and many Latin glosses in a contemporary Irish minuscule;⁴⁸ and the Cotton Vitellius Psalter (c.920), Irish half-uncial, with vigorous if unrefined ornamentation, including two miniatures.⁴⁹ One finds some more biblical scholarship in the Lambeth Commentary, part of an earlier work in Latin and Irish on the Sermon on the Mount, drawing on Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory the Great, copied in the tenth century in compressed Irish minuscule with expert penmanship.⁵⁰ The medieval Irish metrical tracts allow us to peek into the texts and resources of the monastic literary schools. Tract I is dated to the ninth–tenth centuries, but reworked in the eleventh; Tract II is much the same in date; Tract III is dated c.1060; Tract IV is dated before 1079.⁵¹ They draw on a rich library of verse for suitable citations, as teaching examples. These citations date from c.600⁵² to close to their own time of writing.⁵³ The transmission of the teaching handbook *Auricept na nÉces* and its ample apparatus of comment, gloss and subsidiary texts,⁵⁴ bears witness to the same

46 RIA, MS 1243, formerly 23 Q 6, p. 6b = *CIH*, 1150.28. 47 London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1370; M.R. James, *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Lambeth Palace: the medieval manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1932), pp 843–5; D.N. Dumville, 'Mael Brigte mac Tornáin, pluralist coarb (†927)', *JCS*, 4 (2004), 97–116; repr. in D.N. Dumville, *Celtic essays, 2001–2007*, 2 vols (Aberdeen, 2007), i, pp 137–58, esp. pp 154–8. 48 Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 24; M. McNamara, *The psalms in the early Irish church* (Sheffield, 2000), pp 69–70, 144–7. 49 BL, MS Cotton Vitellius F xi; M. McNamara, 'Five Irish psalter texts', *PRIA*, 109C (2009), 68, 92. 50 London, Lambeth Palace Library, Fragments 1229, nos 7–8; L. Bieler and J. Carney (ed. and trans.), 'The Lambeth Commentary', *Ériu*, 23 (1972), 1–55. 51 R. Thurneysen (ed.), 'Mittelirische Verslehren' in W. Stokes and E. Windisch (eds), *Irische Texte, mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, 3rd ser., pt 1 (Leipzig, 1891), pp 1–182; R. Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften und Literaturdenkmälern* (Berlin, 1912), pp 59–90; D. Ó hAodha, 'The first Middle Irish metrical tract' in H.L.C. Tristram (ed.), *Metrik und Medienwechsel/Metrics and media* (Tübingen, 1991), pp 207–44; R. McLaughlin, 'Metres in *Mittelirische Verslehren* III', *Ériu*, 55 (2005), 119–36. 52 R. Thurneysen, 'Colmán mac Lénini and Senchán Torpeist', *ZCP*, 19 (1933), 193–209; R. Thurneysen, 'Zu Verslehren II', *ZCP*, 17 (1927), 271–2, 274 = *CIH*, 557.15–9, 558.4–13 (fragments of Tract II in TCD, MS 1316, formerly H.2.15A). 53 K. Meyer (ed. and trans.), 'Bruchstücke der älteren Lyrik Irlands', *Abhandlungen der Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl.*, no. 7 (Berlin, 1919), §§ 1–4, 6, 8–18, 20–76, 79–88, 129, 133, 136–7, 139–41, 144, 147–147a, 149–50, 153–4, 160, 164–7 (eds and trans. of select citations from the metrical tracts). 54 G. Calder (ed. and trans.), *Auricept na nÉces: the scholar's primer* (Edinburgh, 1917); R. Thurneysen, 'Auricept na n-Éces', *ZCP*, 17 (1927), 277–303; A. Ahlqvist (ed. and trans.), *The*

kind of continuity in scholarship and education. In these areas, at any rate, there is no suggestion that the schools shut shop and locked up the libraries. And if the dates that scholars such as Kuno Meyer, Gerard Murphy, David Greene, James Carney and Kenneth Jackson propose for early medieval verse are at all correct, there was no break in the writing of the most sensitive and subtle lyric poetry of the European Middle Ages.⁵⁵

Despite the remarkable results of more recent scholarship, especially in archaeology,⁵⁶ large questions remain unanswered, even unasked. Here is one. Why were the Vikings so unsuccessful in conquering territory in Ireland? Binchy appears to argue seriously that their attempts were frustrated by the Hydra-headed nature of tribal Irish society: as soon as one tribe was chopped off, another sprang up in its place. Besides, there was, he holds, no central administration to seize as in Anglo-Saxon England:

This extreme fragmentation of sovereignty was one of the most formidable obstacles in the way of any large-scale conquests by the invaders ... they abandoned the idea of conquering the whole or a large area of the country, and confined themselves to occupying small pockets of territory along the coast, carefully selected for both strategic and commercial purposes.⁵⁷

But segmented societies where the centre is weak and power is divided between squabbling kingdoms and lordships are the classic victims of conquerors everywhere. Why did this not happen in Ireland? Compare England. Of the four powerful Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of 800 – Mercia, Northumbria, East Anglia and Wessex – only the last was still standing at the death of King Alfred in 899 and there was no certainty that even that would survive. The evidence is so poor for the rest that we cannot tell why or how they failed. Dioceses closed down, religious houses disappeared. Why not in Ireland?

early Irish linguist (Helsinki, 1982); R. McLaughlin, 'Fénus Farsaid and the alphabets', *Ériu*, 59 (2009), 1–24. ⁵⁵ K. Meyer (ed. and trans.), 'Stories and songs from Irish MSS', *Otia Merseana*, 1 (1899), 113–28; 2 (1900–1), 75–105; Meyer, 'Bruchstücke der älteren Lyrik Irlands'; G. Murphy (ed. and trans.), *Early Irish lyrics, eighth to twelfth century* (Oxford, 1956; repr. with new foreword by T. Ó Cathasaigh, Dublin, 1998); D. Greene and F. O'Connor (ed. and trans.), *A golden treasury of Irish poetry, AD600 to 1200* (London, 1967; repr. Dingle, 1992); J. Carney (ed. and trans.), *Medieval Irish lyrics* (Dublin, 1967; repr. Mountrath, 1985); K.H. Jackson (trans.), *A Celtic miscellany* (2nd ed. London, 1971). ⁵⁶ One wonders why there is no comprehensive bibliography of Viking Ireland – history, archaeology and literature. Nor, though we have the earliest and best annals, is there any prosopography of Vikings in Ireland. For a model worth emulating, see Dominik Wassenhoven's excellent *Skandinavien unterwegs in Europa (1000–1250): Untersuchungen zu Mobilität und Kulturtransfer auf prosopographischer Grundlage* (Berlin, 2006). ⁵⁷ Binchy, 'Passing of the old order', pp 122, 127. Binchy's 'tribal Ireland', which existed from the night of time to whenever you fancy – to the ninth century, to the twelfth, to the sixteenth, if you believe G.A. Hayes-McCoy ('Gaelic society in the late sixteenth century', in G.A. Hayes-McCoy (ed.), *Historical studies 4* (London, 1963), pp 45–61) – needs to be pensioned off. If it has a home anywhere, it belongs safely in the Mesolithic.

Yet Viking fleets and forces in Ireland are comparable with those in Britain and in continental Europe.⁵⁸ Territory directly ruled by Vikings in Ireland, whatever transient extents may have been, finally stabilized as the areas of the diocese of Dublin, the diocese of Waterford, small areas about Limerick, Cork and Wexford, coastal staging-posts for trade,⁵⁹ and some small rural settlements. Yet Charles III and his successors conceded Rouen, the mouth of the Seine and its hinterland to the sea, a strategic area of 30,000km² or more that became the duchy of Normandy. I think one can make the argument that the Vikings of Dublin held the overlordship of all Scotland, at least from about 870.⁶⁰ Amlaíb of Dublin, whom John of Worcester calls 'the pagan Anlaf, king of the Irish and of many islands', led the grand alliance that challenged Æthelstan at *Brunanburh*. If he could lord it over Scotland, and later dominate the northern half of England, why did he fail in Ireland – or did he?

When one compares the Viking assaults on Ireland with the English attack in the twelfth century, the differences are striking. The first little band of invaders that disembarked at Bannow, in May 1169, amounted to thirty knights, three hundred archers on foot, and presumably some more undifferentiated infantry, camp followers and hangers-on. Richard de Clare came with two hundred knights and about a thousand other troops in August 1170. These were the invaders. Henry II's large army, about five thousand in all, transported in four hundred ships, overawed, but did nothing else. Most Irish kings and all the bishops made their submissions promptly, and they knew what they were doing. This appears to be very different from the reaction of the Irish kings to serious numbers of Viking invaders reported in the annals in the middle of the ninth century.⁶¹ Why?

58 N.P. Brooks, 'England in the ninth century: the crucible of defeat', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 29 (1979), 1–20. Viking fleets in Ireland (all data are from the Annals of Ulster): *s.a.* 836, sixty ships on Boyne, sixty ships on Liffey; *s.a.* 848, 140 ships *di muinntir rígh Gall*; *s.a.* 851, 160 ships of Finngeinti versus Dubgeinti at Carlingford; *s.a.* 870, 200 ships from Scotland took a *praeda maxima hominum* to Dublin; *s.a.* 920, thirty-two ships in Loch Febail, thirty ships in Cenn Magair; *s.a.* 923, 900 drowned of a Viking *nóchoblach* at Loch Cuan (the crews of thirty to forty ships?). The ninth-century killings listed in n. 61 below (if the numbers have any colour of truth) will account for all these crews and more besides. 59 J. Sheehan et al., 'A Viking-Age maritime haven: a reassessment of the island settlement at Beginish, Co. Kerry', *JIA*, 10 (2001), 93–119. 60 D. Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the ninth century', *Peritia*, 12 (1998), 330–7. 61 We need not, of course, believe all their numbers (they calculate in multiples of dozens, scores and hundreds), but this is what the annals say about the killings of Vikings in the mid-ninth-century crisis (all from the Annals of Ulster): *s.a.* 836, 120 killed in Mugdorna Breg; *s.a.* 846, 1,200 led by Haakon killed; *s.a.* 847, 700 killed by Máel Sechnaill; 1,200 killed by Ólchobar, king of Munster, and Lorcán, king of Leinster at Sciath Nechtain; *s.a.* 847, 1,200 killed by Tigernach in South Brega; *s.a.* 847, 500 killed by Eóganacht Chaisil. About forty ships can transport 1,200 men.

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